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THE LATER EVANGELICAL FATHERS.

THE

LATER EVANGELICAL FATHERS

JOHN THORNTON, JOHN NEWTON,
WILLIAM COWPER, THOMAS SCOTT, RICHARD CECIL,
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, CHARLES SIMEON,
HENRY MARTYN, JOSIAH PRATT.

BY

M. SEELEY.

"It is because the Fathers of the Evangelical Succession continually resorted to Holy Scripture, as at once the ultimate source, and the one criterion of all religious truth, that we reverently hail them as the restorers and witnesses of the faith in their own and succeeding generations.

After every allowance shall have been made . . . enough will remain to convince any impartial enquirer that the first generation of the Clergy, designated as Evangelical, were the second Founders of the Church of England."

Sir JAMES STEPHEN, *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography.*

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PREFACE.

THE term Evangelical is used in this volume as a convenient and well-understood designation. Its origin, as a name given to the leaders of the revival in the eighteenth century, is uncertain. "When and by whom the term was first used to describe the movement it is difficult to say. Towards the close of the century it is not unusual to find among writers of different views censures of 'those who have arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of Evangelical,' but it is very unusual indeed to find the writers of the Evangelical school applying the title to their own party, and when they do, it is generally followed by some apology, intimating that they only use it because it has become usual in common parlance. There is not the slightest evidence to show that the early Evangelicals claimed the title as their own in any spirit of self-glorification."* No doubt it expressed at first a broad, and in the main a true distinction. It

* "The Church of England in the Eighteenth Century." By the Rev. C. J. Abbey and the Rev. J. H. Overton. London, 1878. An important work, which appeared while these sketches were in preparation.

was the preaching of the Evangelical leaders which, to use Dean Merivale's expression, "awakened the Church of England from its philosophical pride or lethargy." * But if in those days they were not forward to claim for themselves the title in any spirit of exclusiveness, still less would they have done so in the present day. "I venture boldly to affirm," says Canon Ryle, "that the success of many clergymen of other schools than my own arises mainly from the fact that, wittingly or unwittingly, they often preach the very same doctrines that we do. Sixty years ago they would have been called downright Evangelicals. We have no longer any monopoly of Evangelical truth."

In these simple sketches no attempt has been made to give an impartial estimate of the men whose noble lives are briefly related—to weigh and balance their merits and defects. This has been done again and again by abler pens than mine, and to me the task would be as impossible as it would be distasteful. Their names have been to me, from my earliest years, the names of Fathers in the Church. They did not all hold spiritual office, nor did they all attain to venerable age, but their lives were fruitful, and they all left spiritual successors and sons, to whom the examples of Thornton and Wilberforce, the consecrated gifts of Cowper, and the heroism of Martyn, no less than the wisdom of Cecil and the labours of Simeon, are a valued inheritance.

* "Four Lectures on some Epochs of Early Church History." By Charles Merivale, D.D., Dean of Ely. London, 1879.

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THE

LATER EVANGELICAL FATHERS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following series of biographical sketches has a unity of purpose which may not at first sight be apparent; for the selection has not been made at random, without reference to time or place. The remarkable men whose careers and whose labours it is designed to place in as concise a manner as possible before the general reader were, in fact, in a sense, workers together, not by any pre-arrangement of their own, but very evidently in the arrangement of the providence of God; and they occupied prominent places in a very extraordinary period in the history both of our Church and of our country;—a period covering some eighty or ninety years; that is, the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century.

The history of the Church of Christ has not been, by any means, one of steady progress. It has not regularly gone on advancing towards the position in which it finds itself to-day. There have been great and glorious times, when all seemed to indicate a speedy

triumph; and, again, there have been times when the general prospect seemed to be only of decay and death. It was in an age of promise and of advance, however, that these spiritual heroes—for such they were—found themselves called to run each one his course.

The eighteenth century, in fact, was, like our own, one of progress; but it differed from the nineteenth in this important point, that while this opened in the very midst of a renewal of life, both moral and spiritual, that began with a great collapse. Strange—yes, passing strange—it must appear to those who recollect the glorious ending of the seventeenth, and the doughty deeds of those who then did battle for their liberties and their faith, that such should have been the case. As giants we are accustomed to regard those men, and giants indeed they were; but then we must remember that in the next generation those giants were represented in England by but the puniest of their offspring. For the best and boldest, those who could not keep silence, driven away by the persecutions under the Stuarts, had gone to found the colonies of New England and Virginia, where they might worship God according to the light of His Word; and had left behind them, for the most part, those of slighter build, and more easy faith, who, it would appear, sat quietly down to enjoy the liberty gained for them by their sires and grandsires; whilst they indolently left the fruits of their victories all unreaped and unharvested.

Once on a time, indeed, had old Bishop Latimer

cheered his brother-martyr at the stake by the prediction that such a candle should that day be lighted in England as by God's grace should never be put out. But at the period of which I speak that candle had certainly burnt so low that grave fears were by some entertained that it was about to expire altogether. That was, perhaps, the worst period in our modern history; and little need would there have been to marvel had our nation then been left to eat the fruit of its own ways, and had found itself cast off like many another which had despised its privileges.

But we *are* a favoured people; and little as such long-suffering mercy was deserved, it was just then, when things seemed all but desperate, that He who doeth all things after the counsel of His own will, saw fit to make His power and His presence known and felt; and both our country and our Church were saved.

Then began the great revival of the eighteenth century, a passage in the history of Christianity as remarkable as any that in the whole course of it can be found, and one in which the proofs of the action of one great Master Mind, impelling, directing, controlling the whole, are strong enough to satisfy any candid inquirer after truth. Even a careless student can see, and will confess, that a great and most marked change for the better had somehow or other come over the land ere the first hour of 1800 had struck; but it is worth the inquiry how and by what means that change was wrought. And, standing as we do now on the vantage-ground of a certain distance from

the time of action, that inquiry may be pursued with a calmness which perhaps during the conflict was impossible; while surely the proofs of design and of a Great Designer must thus appear too manifest to be mistaken. My object here, however, is not to tell the story of that great movement—a story which may be studied in the various memoirs of the times, as well as in works devoted especially to that subject.* Those of whom I have to tell, for the most part lived and flourished when the season of buds and blossoms was over, and when the early fruit began to appear. They were those who, when the Church was in a measure aroused, were appointed to set her to work, and particularly to urge her onwards into "the regions beyond." At the same time, so different were the circumstances of those times, and the consequent positions of these honoured labourers from those of the present day, that in order to understand what they did, and to appreciate their labours, together with the results, it seems necessary to begin by taking a cursory and bird's-eye view of the whole century from its very beginning.

For while we all well know what England now is, there are certainly but few who realize her condition some hundred and eighty years back, in the time of that terrible collapse, of which I have already spoken; when politically, as well as morally and spiritually, the country was in a far lower condition than it is at present.

Let us try to picture it to ourselves.

* Especially in Canon Ryle's "Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century."

Going back, then, to the year 1702, we find a female sovereign just seated on the throne, and the country about to engage in a war with France, which was then aspiring to universal dominion under the "Grand Monarque," Louis XIV. In the course of that war the power of France was, however, broken; and England then, through the prowess and victories of Marlborough, made a considerable advance towards that high standing which she has since attained amongst European powers.

Meantime internal changes took place, and, very notably, the union of the Scottish with the English Parliament was effected; whilst the northern kingdom was quieted by the recognition of the Presbyterian Kirk as the Established Church of Scotland. This was a particularly happy event, for it put an end to the constant struggle which had hitherto gone on there between the Church and the people, and which was so injurious to the nation. Moreover, it was followed by an Act for establishing schools in every parish in that land, and by other measures by which Scotland was rapidly raised from a miserable and turbulent country into the industrious and peaceable one which she now is. In the matter of schools indeed, Scotland seems to have been by this Act placed in advance of England; yet during this reign many parochial schools were also founded in England, especially in London, and that by the personal influence of Queen Anne herself. Moreover, many of the endowed schools throughout the country date from this period.

Queen Anne did also another very good deed

when she gave up a large revenue in tithes for the purpose of augmenting the incomes of the poorer clergy.

All these were steps in advance, and excellent preparatory measures also for something higher. Nor should it be forgotten that even before Anne's reign an important move had been made, as early as 1696, by the formation of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, through the efforts of a few private gentlemen, and a little later, in 1701, by the origination out of this of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Through the agency of these two societies some efforts were made for the evangelization of our colonies, and many thousands of Bibles and Prayer Books were circulated through the country. We see plainly therefore that Christianity had not utterly perished out of the land.

But then Queen Anne's was by no means the worst period.

All through her reign we have to remember that there was the struggle going on to secure the Protestant succession, with the Pretender always on the watch to regain what he considered to be his own rightful inheritance—a terror to some and an object of chivalrous devotion to others.

After a reign of twelve years Anne died, and George I. of Hanover succeeded. Cold, un-English, and unloved, neither he nor his son, George II., ever gained or tried to gain the affections of the nation; and their reigns continued to be disturbed by invasions, or threatened invasions, of the self-styled

James III. and of his son. Much bitter political feeling was the consequence; and unhappily this feeling, which was either for or against the divine right of kings, largely took the place of true religious principle. So things went from bad to worse through both these reigns, so far as what we may call the *upper wave of feeling* was parceptible.

We had not then our great manufacturing and mining interests, for our natural riches in coal and iron were scarcely yet suspected. Our navy was inferior to that of the Dutch; and our colonial possessions comparatively small; Australia and New Zealand being, so far as we were concerned, but lands of the future, and India still remaining a matter of dispute between the French and ourselves, until the battle of Plassy was fought and won.

Of course we had our American colonies; but, to our shame be it spoken, we largely used these for the worst of purposes; namely, for the encouragement of the abominable slave trade, in which then lay *our chief source of wealth.** That atrocious traffic in human flesh and blood had begun, as far as England was concerned, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and was inaugurated by Sir John Hawkins. It was in 1562 that he first seized and transported some 300 negroes from Sierra Leone to Hispaniola; and then, having obtained his sovereign's approval and patronage, he assumed for his crest a manacled negro, and with his second ship, blasphemously named the "Jesus," he

* See "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," by Mr. Lecky.

made another and more extensive raid on the coast of Guinea.

Thus patronized, the trade henceforth went on, and attained to its height in 1713, when, by one provision of the Treaty of Utrecht, England secured a monopoly of the supply of slaves to the Spanish colonies. The traffic was protected by law, and became thoroughly ingrained into the spirit of the nation, all heedless as the people were of the blood-guiltiness which was thereby incurred. Lord Dartmouth's words, on a remonstrance from America reaching him, are a proof of this: "We cannot allow the colonies," said he, "to check or discourage in any way a traffic so beneficial to the nation."

So, while rejoicing in their own liberty, Englishmen went on capturing and transporting the poor blacks, as if they had been brute beasts, until the time came for a great change of public opinion.

But turning from this melancholy picture to our own social position and to the then condition of the arts and of civilization, we find again a vast difference between the condition of England at that time and its present state. Neither steamboats nor steam carriages were then thought of, much less the electric telegraph. Good stage coaches were only just beginning to run, while yet the roads were but very indifferent. And, of course, as a rule, people did not travel; at least, a journey of any kind was an event; and if got over without an attack from highwaymen, or any other misadventure, there was real matter of congratulation. No penny postman knocked at any

one's door in those days, no newspapers were hawked about the streets, and but few existed. No gas-lights were seen in the streets; no policemen guarded them; no tram-cars or omnibuses ran to and fro; but travellers went on foot, on horseback, or, may be, in hackney-carriages or post-chaises; and by night armed watchmen patrolled the streets and announced the passing hours by their calls. There were no sanitary arrangements or sanitary inspectors; no such thing as vaccination was known; many of our modern hospitals were not built; medical science was but in its infancy, and when any epidemic occurred there was little beyond private benevolence for the poor to depend on. As for education, it was not then reckoned as a thing for the masses at all; there were no ragged or Sunday schools, and in rural districts frequently no school at all, though in others the old dame school supplied in some measure the want; but, as has been stated, the idea of educating the poor was only just beginning to gain ground; as is proved by the erection of parochial schools in some of the larger towns.

To counterbalance all these deficiencies it must be remembered, however, that the population in those days was far, very far below its present mark, and that probably private responsibilities were sometimes more vividly realized than now, when so many depend on the action of societies; and there can be no doubt that domestic order and discipline were unquestionably far more strict.

We have advanced in the various matters just enu-

merated, and in many others left untouched; yet for all that, there are many old people, as we know, who still mourn over the good old times of their own or of their parents' youth. But it is a golden haze which covers the past, and drapes it in illusions; and it needs only a comparison between the light and liberty of the present and the ignorance and slavery of the past, to convince any calm, dispassionate thinker that, as has been well observed, no times in the history of our world were ever equal in advantages of all kinds to those in which we live. Truly, how many so ever of good isolated examples in the time of which I speak we may be able to recal, we have only to look into the literature of the period to discover how low were the morals as well as the religious feeling of that age. Learned men, no doubt, there were in sufficient numbers during Queen Anne's reign to cause that to be denominated "the Augustan age of Britain;" but yet the tone of light popular literature, and of the works of fiction and romance, in this and the succeeding reigns, was so lamentably debased, that few indeed were the works of that description that could have conduced either to good morals or good breeding.

We turn to the theology, and we find that to consist almost entirely of defences of the faith. It was, in fact, a defensive and not an offensive warfare against the powers of evil that was then carried on; and this just because infidel writings so largely abounded. Infidelity indeed then prevailed to such an alarming extent that timid Christians really trembled for the very existence of Christianity. And as the century

advanced things seemed, up to a certain point, to grow worse instead of better. But even as early as the days of the "good Queen Anne" we have Bishop Burnet bemoaning the imminent ruin hanging over the Church; which, he said, arose as much from internal decay as from external dangers. And, a little later, Archbishop Secker tells us that "an open disregard for religion had become the distinguishing character of the age;" while Bishop Butler adds his testimony that "it had come, he knew not how, to be taken for granted by many that Christianity had been at length discovered to be fictitious, and that nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule."

So he wrote his famous work on natural religion; Sir Isaac Newton produced his book on the "Fulfilled Prophecies," and Nathaniel Lardner his "Credibility of the Gospel History;" whilst Berkeley, Sherlock, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and others, composed defensive treatises which are still standard works in our own day.

But none of these affected the condition of the mass of the people.

The churches in London and the large cities continued to be all but empty, and of those who did attend the services, but few indeed by any stretch of charity could be regarded at all as worshippers,—so utterly indecorous and unseemly was the general conduct of the congregations.

In some country villages, especially where there was a good squire, things might be better; but so

far as can be gathered from the testimony remaining, a good conscientious pastor, either in town or country, either in the Church of England or out of it, was then a great rarity.

Addison pronounced it to be an unquestionable truth that there was then less appearance of religion in England than in any neighbouring state, whether Protestant or Catholic. And Montesquieu declared that "there was no religion in England,—that the subject if mentioned in society excited nothing but laughter, and that not more than four or five members of the House of Commons were regular attendants at church,"—words which, if somewhat exaggerated, as it is clear they were, at least had a good foundation in truth. And what was the practical result?

Sir James Stephen, in one of his lectures makes the following remark:—"The theology of any age at once ascertains and regulates its moral stature; and at the period of which we speak the austere virtues of the Puritans, and the meek and social, though not less devout spirit of the worthies of the Church of England, if still to be detected in the recesses of private life, were *discountenanced by the general habits of society.*"

And Canon Ryle in plainer terms declares that "duelling, adultery, fornication, gambling, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and drunkenness were hardly regarded as any vices at all. They were the fashionable practices of people in the highest ranks of society."

Yet whilst such was the condition of the nation, and whilst, as we see, it was mourned over by a few pious souls both among Churchmen and Dissenters, we look in vain through the first quarter of the century for any who with the unclouded faith of the Hookers and Baxters, the Howes, Donnes, Taylors, Halls, or Bunyans, of other days, should raise their voices as men who knew what the only remedy was, and who felt that it was theirs to wield unflinchingly the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Such men, however, or rather men of their spirit, and men prepared for the times, were about to appear. It was like the darkness that precedes the dawn; but the dawn was nevertheless at hand. While infidelity still stalked abroad, while doubt and dread hung over many a mind, and a kind of despair took possession of others, then the Lord who ruleth on high at length made His presence to be felt. It had seemed as though His remembrancers had cried to Him in vain, and as if their prayers were all unheeded; but now, "like a giant refreshed with wine, God seemed," in the words of the Psalmist, "to awake out of sleep," and by His own instruments, prepared each one apart—one here, another there—to do what none as yet had seemed able even to attempt.

Let those who say that they would fain believe in the truth of revelation and Christianity, but cannot find a satisfactory proof that their origin is divine, read the memoirs and ponder well the history of that great revival, making what deductions they will for the shortcomings of the men, but marking

the real unity of the whole work, and then the vast and enormous results ;—going, as it were, backwards and forwards in their minds, contrasting what England was at its beginning with what these men left her, and further what she has become under all the following extensions of that spiritual awakening; and then ask themselves what but a Divine Power at work could have wrought the change?

I must pause, to do little more than name those who were really the apostles of the movement; and they were only some eleven or twelve.

And first the two Wesleys, but, of course, principally John, and about the same time Whitefield, began the work. The former were the sons of a country clergyman and the latter of an innkeeper. They were awakened by no sudden means; but gradually, especially John Wesley, doing the will of God as far as they knew it, they came to the knowledge of the Saviour. In Christ Church, Oxford, they and one or two others used to meet and study their Greek Testament; and while they studied, they also laid down such strict rules for their daily lives that they were soon surnamed the "Methodists." From the first also they tried to evangelize, by visiting the prisons, and among the poor.

But when they really discovered the Gospel to be the only panacea for evils of all kinds, and also their own powers in the way of preaching, then they gave themselves to that work, as but very few indeed had ever done before; and great was the impression which they everywhere produced. Men and women of all

classes came together in immense crowds to hear them, and with such blessed results that eternity alone can reveal how many shall be their crown of rejoicing.

Meanwhile, all apart, Rowlands, the apostle of Wales, was aroused, and he too went to work, and these three, though attached members of the Church of England, soon found themselves cast out of her bosom on account of the doctrines which they taught.

A few others, however, retained their positions; and Grimshaw, and a little later Henry Venn, in Yorkshire, evangelized all round the north; Fletcher of Madeley, in Shropshire and its neighbourhood; the eccentric Berridge of Everton, in six or seven of the eastern counties; while Toplady, best known now as the hymn-writer, laboured in Devonshire, and Walker in Cornwall.

It was a revival, especially in the Church of England, and evidently by means of our church the country was to be aroused. This is said without any idea of disparagement to other bodies, who equally needed and who shared in the blessing and soon joined in the great work. But the change began in the Established Church, which but for these zealous men might have remained still in state of torpor.

I have only here named the chief of them, but must not forget to make special notice of Romaine, the one of the whole band most evidently fitted for city work, and the one who found himself quite early in life called to occupy a post in London, where he was the most noted preacher for many a year; and where,

after patiently standing his ground against the most desperate opposition, he at length came to be so highly esteemed that at his death it was found utterly impossible to give him a private funeral.

Meantime, though these were the men of perhaps greatest renown, yet here and there one and another were taking up their ministry in downright earnest, and the names of Robinson of Leicester, and Riland, of Birmingham, were far from being unknown in their day and generation; and the labourers, being but few, were as a rule much drawn together in brotherly love, as they met and mutually discovered that it was one work which they were doing. God Himself had indeed worked; and each one individually felt and acknowledged His hand; nevertheless there had been no haste in the working, for in most of these cases the personal change in the minister had been wrought very gradually, and the process had covered in some instances a space of years. Worthy of note, too, was the way in which their centres of action were arranged, so that about the same time the whole country should be acted upon, or, in the strong language of old Bunyan, "stormed by the mighty ones of Emmanuel."

In this arrangement we may see one of the clearest proofs of design somewhere, but certainly not in themselves; for it came about in each case through some peculiar circumstance, and generally without communication with any other. Then, too, the work was to be done, as of old, through the "foolishness of preaching," and very considerable appear to have

been the powers of most—perhaps of all—of them as public speakers. Whitefield, doubtless, was the prince among them; for he possessed a voice and power of elocution perfectly marvellous. He was really the originator of the important institution of open-air preaching; but Rowlands must have been in this matter a giant too, for he was a centre of attraction to the whole principality. Fletcher would have been, in the opinion of Wesley himself, but for the want of physical strength, the first preacher in England; while Romaine had all those qualities which could draw and retain large congregations of business men and men of thought, sometimes of learning.

True, some of the others were eccentric; they had gifts differing one from another, and some were fitted for rural districts, others for town life; but that the good hand of the Lord was with them all who shall dare to doubt?

In labours most abundant,* in journeyings oft, they laboured not for themselves; for through love to Christ and to perishing souls, they scorned positions which their powers might easily have won them, and as for the silver and the gold, these were counted by them as dross.

We are often tempted now-a-days to discuss coldly the respective merits of these great men, or perhaps their failings; but let us, instead, pause here to consider the results of their work.

Beforehand, we had England cold, dead, indifferent,

* In the course of the thirty-four years of his ministry Whitefield is said to have preached 18,000 times.

a land of empty churches and irreligious people. A few years pass over, and the whole country is roused; and then we may picture to ourselves the two travelling evangelists, Whitefield and Wesley, continually addressing enormous multitudes, and seeing almost each time that they did so, many conscience-stricken and crying, "What shall we do to be saved?"

We may think of Grimshaw, with his ten or a dozen weekly services in church, in cottage or in barn, about his own parish, and often called hither and thither to preach elsewhere, not only in Yorkshire, but in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire; then of Rowlands, and of the crowds singing their Welsh hymns as they travelled to hear him, or on Sacrament days thronging to the Lord's table to the number of 2,000 or 3,000 communicants. We pass on to Walker and his Cornish miners, across to Everton with its eccentric pastor Berridge, ever on the move, ever at work; and then to the metropolis, where laboured that studious city preacher, William Romaine.

The face of the country and the prospects of religion are altogether changed.

Frequent irregularity there had been through all that time; for the condition of the people required strong and out-of-the-way measures. It would not do for clergymen in our days to be preaching "by their leave or against their leave" in other men's parishes. But then, all over the land the pastors had forsaken their flocks, the people were perishing for lack of knowledge, and these Elijahs and Elishas who sud-

denly appeared, urged on to the rescue by the mighty fire that burnt within them, could not be bound, and, what is more, the word of the Lord had free course and was glorified. In a short space of time the few evangelists were multiplied to hundreds; and then gradually did order resume its sway.

There had been a great quickening; and henceforward the living Church began to move—not the teachers only, but the people, the great body of those who composed the Church. On all sides there began a questioning, What can I do? What shall I do? and the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," went up day by day from no unmeaning lips, but with deep longing and desire; and thus mighty works began to be attempted in the name of the Lord.

Still the awakening went on; still, thank God, the life continues, though into the midst of the great harvest-field the old enemy has since then cast his tares.

But among the many workers there were still needed, and there were happily still found, some who deserved to be called chiefs, some whose names stand out as those of men who should be held in everlasting remembrance, as the originators of great designs, as the abolishers of long-standing evils, as great teachers of the people. Such were those nine of whom the following chapters treat, every one of whom having passed away before the year 1850, and most of them much earlier, there is already danger of their fading from the remembrance of the present generation.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN THORNTON.

1720—1790.

> "Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
> Restless as his who toils and sweats for food."
>
> *Cowper.*

"THERE is a history yet to be written which will declare that amongst the mightiest forces for good in this land have been the social and religious enterprises of the Christian Church."

So most truly remarked a speaker at one of our recent anniversaries; for in ordinary histories how little do we find respecting such matters? And yet to write such a history might prove a somewhat difficult task, inasmuch as the materials are in some cases rather difficult to obtain. Biographies, it is true, abound in our day; but there was a time when such works were not common. Instances, in fact, occur where of some great benefactor of his species no memoir has ever been written, and where particulars of his work are therefore scarce and often obscure; and, so far as now appears, it was so in the case of the "ever-memorable John Thornton," who, on

account of his early date, and the position which he occupied with reference to other workers, must, albeit that he was a layman, stand first in our series. It was in a very critical period that he was appointed to occupy his peculiar position. He lived before the birth of our great societies, before our orphanages were built, before many of our hospitals were even projected. He lived in times when, generally speaking, if good was to be done, it must be done by private exertions, and through private means. And yet he lived when there was a growing consciousness of past neglect, and of the need for action—when, in short, many were planning and attempting works for the good of their fellow-creatures and for the glory of God.

In the present day no sooner is an evil recognised than men and women combine to combat it. They appeal to the public, they form a society, and soon the needed supplies come in. Now, we are accustomed to hear the complaint that the multiplication of societies is an evil of our times, that the demands on the public are too great, and the calls too many. This is the state of things to-day; but then it was very different,—so entirely different indeed that without some extraordinary supply of means the willing workers must in many cases have stood still, and a large portion of the work which they planned must have been left untouched. But the silver and the gold, quite as much as the hearts of men, are in the hands of the Lord, and just at the time when they were needed He provided a dispenser as well as a purse.

This dispenser was John Thornton; and the purse He put into his hands.

It was a time, as I have said before, when God Himself was doing great things by means of single individuals. He was calling out one here and one there, to stand in some great gap. Each one was, as it would appear, to be a marked man, and thus often to do the double work of occupying a certain post, and of serving as an example to others.

I am speaking generally (for some certainly served the latter purpose more evidently than others), but still especially with reference to the subject of the present chapter.

The duty of giving is one that needs to be constantly brought before the Church of Christ, and perhaps never more so than in a time of religious fervour; and therefore, we cannot doubt, a bright example was to be given to it at that particular crisis, in John Thornton, on whom were liberally bestowed both the means and the ready mind.

Few indeed of all the human race, or in any period, ever set before themselves so high a standard, or pressed forward so persistently towards the mark of perfect stewardship, as did John Thornton; and yet for all that, though we meet his name at every turn, in reading the history of the times in the biographies of his contemporaries, we have to content ourselves with these reminiscences, and with such few notices of him as were published after his death.

From these, therefore, the best idea that can be formed of him must be obtained, and from these the

following sketch is drawn, for it certainly is not fitting that such a one should be forgotten, or suffered to pass out of memory.

John Thornton was born, then, in 1720,—that is, in the sixth year of King George I., and just as John Wesley was approaching manhood. If any record of his childhood and early youth exists, it seems to be unknown; and so is the history of his early spiritual life. This one fact is, however, left on record, that when he attained his majority, and set out in life, it was with a fortune of £100,000 that he began; and this, it should be remembered, was really a far larger sum in those days than it would be accounted at present.

Then, in the memoir of the life of the Rev. Henry Venn, of Huddersfield, and afterwards of Yelling, it is mentioned that soon after entering on his first curacy at Clapham he became acquainted with a young man of deep piety, whose views of divine truth soon became congenial with his own.

This young man was no other than John Thornton, who soon came to be known as the richest merchant in England, and, with one exception, in Europe, and by far the most liberal.

It was of this same man that Mr. Scott said, in his funeral sermon after his decease, that "he was commonly regarded rather as a prodigy to be wondered at, than as an example to be followed;" and yet by some that example was followed, and the lesson thus afforded has done infinite good.

If ever there was a man of one idea, it may con-

fidently be affirmed that it was this rich merchant. And what a splendid idea it was! We do not know how it was introduced into his mind; yet on his entry into life it seems to have been firmly rooted there, —that these good things of which he found himself possessed were not gifts, but loans; and that as he was not his own, but a purchased slave of his Redeemer, so neither were his riches his own property, but just the talents committed to his care as a steward.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" had said the Saviour; and can we doubt that those words had made a deep impression on his youthful mind; and that very early in life he had resolved to try the power of that grace which renders all things possible?

Be that as it may, whether a mother's voice first found the willing ear, or that of a father, or whether it was by means of preaching, or of the simple reading of God's word, the result was soon made manifest; and no sooner did he enter upon life than he began to be known as one of the most liberal of men.

"His charities," said a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "transcended belief, and reached even the remotest parts of the globe. Generally the half of his income was devoted to these purposes."

But the fact really was that no one could possibly tell how much John Thornton gave away, because he was not like many men, who reckon upon public *éclat* and public praise. To him, how to give and when to give, were a life study. His property must be laid out

to the very best account in his great Master's service, and therefore *he hearkened to His calls.* Those calls were a part of his daily work, and troublesome as they might be, he never seems to have contented himself with turning to them a deaf ear, or a cold, unsympathizing heart and voice.

It is well, indeed, to hear of thousands given when thousands are needed; yet the Lord looketh not on the amount, but on the heart of the giver.

This was never forgotten by John Thornton.

Most evidently did he regard himself only as a steward responsible for the use made of a large property. And he had his reward even here; but it was not the reward of seeing his good deeds in print. No; it was the reward *in himself.* Having accustomed himself not only to give but to listen, his heart became indeed a heart of flesh. The various cries of distress entered there; and so he learnt the luxury of giving.

"He was," says Sir James Stephen, "one of those rare men in whom the desire to relieve distress assumes the form of a master passion." "To form and execute plans of usefulness," said Mr. Scott, "to select proper agents to carry on correspondence for these ends—these and such concerns were the main occupations of his life, nor did he think his time well spent if not so employed."

And what he next adds is worthy of thoughtful attention. "He observed a strict frugality in his personal expenses. He had no relish for magnificence."

"His dinner-hour," we learn from Mr. Wilberforce,

"was two o'clock; and on several evenings in the week he attended service at some church or chapel in the neighbourhood, often sitting up afterwards to a late hour in his private apartment, engaged in religious exercises."

Here, indeed, we have the secret of this good man's life, and see that he was not merely one of a kind disposition, but that he was a Christian, feeling himself in the midst of temptations, pressing towards the mark of his high calling, and with an eye open to sorrows wholly invisible to the merely benevolent worldling. "His bounties," as Cowper said, "were all Christian;" and his eye was over the land to see what others were doing, and to note where he could help. He watched whilst England was awakening from north to south, from east to west; and watched in order to see what he could do.

The multitudes had not stood in vain to hearken to the burning words of Whitefield, of Wesley, of Rowlands, of Grimshaw, and others. God's Spirit had been and was still over them, and many were they who believed. When Romaine first began his course, he could count but six or seven of the clergy like-minded with himself; but before he died he could reckon over five hundred whom he regarded as fellow-labourers in word and doctrine. And all these men, as they awoke to a sense of their responsibilities, naturally strove to overtake the heavy arrears of the past; to say nothing of the thousands among the laity who were likewise pressing into the vineyard.

Mr. Thornton anxiously watched, as far as he

could, what all these people were doing, and was never better pleased than when he could give any one a helping hand.

He was concerned in the very first plan—and that was originated, like many another good one, in a meeting of a society which will often be mentioned in this volume, the Eclectic,—in a plan for sending a chaplain to Botany Bay.

The Rev. R. Johnson, the predecessor to the Rev. Samuel Marsden, was the person chosen, and through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce he was appointed.

In 1786 the Rev. Henry Venn wrote to a friend, "I have received a letter from dear Mr. Thornton, saying that he, last Sunday, introduced Mr. Richard Johnson to 250 of his future congregation aboard the hulk at Woolwich."

Thus was he ready to seize any possible opportunity of doing good abroad ; but in those days there were not many such occasions, while the work at home was so overwhelming.

In those days livings had not been "augmented ;" there were no "additional grants for curates ;" no Pastoral Aid Society, or London and Town Missions then existed. There was no Tract Society or Bible Society as yet, even for home work.

What then could these many workers, often with small means, do ?

The fact is, as we have remarked, that it is impossible to say what they could have done, if God had not called out and prepared a John Thornton. But it is evident that he was just the provison for the necessities

of the times; and, as may easily be seen, he answered, for that particular period, a thousand times better than any organizations of which we can conceive. With nearly all the benevolent schemes of the times we find his name connected in some way; and those who knew him testify how earnestly he entered into those good works for which he gave his money, as well as how cheerily he gave whenever he felt that it would serve a good purpose. He was the almoner-general; and his purse was the common resource to which all the good people fled when they wanted supplies for their work; while at the same time many a widow and orphan, and many a needy pastor worn out with anxiety and pinching poverty, found in him a ready and sympathizing friend.

Here, indeed, lay one great distinction between himself and many another well known as a liberal almsgiver,—that people had access to him, that they could go and tell him of their pinching poverty or pressing need, and find in him a ready listener and a compassionate sympathizer. And he would be as liberal where but a small sum was needed as where a large one might be asked of him. For with him, we see plainly, it was not merely a question as to the amount—"Do I give the right proportion?" but also as to the manner, and the channel into which his bounty was to flow—"Do I listen for the Lord's voice?"

No wonder that Sir James Stephen should speak of him as "a merchant renowned in his generation for a munificence more than princely."

The following instances will show the manner of the man.

The Welsh apostle, Daniel Rowlands, was a poor man all his life; yet he might have had a good benefice had he not preferred to remain with his flock at Llangeitho. One was offered him by John Thornton, and when it was declined this message was sent through the son,—"The reasons your father assigns are highly creditable to him. It is not usual with me to allow other people to go to my pocket, but tell your father he is fully welcome to do so whenever he pleases."

On one occasion Mr. Thornton paid a visit to the Rev. J. Newton at Olney. When he left the vicarage, he put into Mr. Newton's hands a sum of money for hospitalities and for the poor, saying, "Help the poor and needy. Keep open house for such as are deserving. I will allow you statedly £200 a year, and will readily send whatever you may have occasion to draw for more."

Mr. Newton once said that in this way he believed he had received from Mr. Thornton more than £3,000.

A fortune, no matter how large, might soon thus be spent; but one scheme on which he expended very many thousands of pounds remains to be mentioned.

It was difficult in those times to get faithful men appointed to important and influential positions; so strong in high places was the feeling against evangelical doctrine, and so common was the practice in cases of private patronage—a practice, alas! still far too common—of regarding a cure of souls only in

the light of a piece of valuable property, and of giving it away accordingly.

Mr. Thornton therefore devoted large sums to the purchase of livings which he might have at his own disposal, as in the case of the offer made to Daniel Rowlands.

These livings were after his death known as "The Thornton Trust," and secured, as far as was possible, to be given only to evangelical persons.

A man who spent his money in this manner might well value its possession, and yet would he be one who might be expected to bear losses well.

One anecdote has been preserved which shows that this was the case.

On opening his letters one morning, he found one which gave him tidings of the wreck of a valuable ship and cargo, by which he suffered a heavy loss. He looked in serious mood for a few moments, and then, turning to other letters, which, as was daily the case, besought his aid for some charitable and religious purposes, his face brightened, and he took out his cheque-book and began to write, cheerily saying, "Let us try to do a little good while we have still the means of doing so."

And it has been often related how on another occasion, when he had been listening to a tale of distress told him by a poor clergyman who was weighed down by the expenses of a large family, and had just gladdened his heart by a cheque for £5, a letter was put into his hand. He took it and read it, and then said, "My dear sir, I have just received tidings

of so heavy a loss that I must ask you to return my cheque."

The poor man did so, naturally with a very heavy heart, when Mr. Thornton immediately took his pen, and having added another figure, gave it back to his astonished visitor, who quickly discovered that he had now in his hands a cheque, not for £5, but for £50.

Mr. Thornton, no doubt, had his failings, though, as he had no biographers, these have not been told to us. It has somewhere, however, been hinted that he was somewhat eccentric, and possibly he showed his eccentricities something in the manner just related. "Conscious of no aims but such as might invite scrutiny," says Sir James Stephen, "he pursued them after his own fearless fashion, yielding to every honest impulse, choosing his associates in scorn of mere worldly precepts, and worshipping with any fellow-Christian whose heart beat in unison with his own."

It would, perhaps, have made the Church too little independent had such a fund of wealth been long at its command without the necessity for taking trouble in collecting it; and no doubt when, in 1790, John Thornton was taken to his rest, just one year before John Wesley departed, there must have been a kind of orphaned feeling in a very wide circle indeed.

But the example had been given; and in the next ten years there was a vast expansion of earnest feeling and of growth. That Christ's kingdom might come, not only here in our own little isle, but everywhere, in all

countries of the habitable globe, became increasingly the yearning desire of many a Christian heart. And it would seem as if even then the vision of the angel spoken of in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation was about to receive a wider fulfilment than had yet been seen, in the carrying of the everlasting gospel through all the world.

John Thornton did not, however, live to see the commencement of the age of missions. He died just as it was beginning, and his old friend Mr. Venn thus wrote of the event:—"I have very sensibly felt the loss of my old and affectionate friend John Thornton, after an intimacy of thirty-six years, from his first receiving Christ till he took his departure with a convoy of angels to see Him who had so long been all his salvation and all his desire." Few of the followers of the Lamb, it may be truly said, have ever done more to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, or to spread the knowledge of Christ crucified.

His children asked him at the last hour whether he was happy ."Yes," he said, "happy in Jesus; all things are as well as they can be." The last words were "Precious, precious"—Jesus, he would have added, but his breath failed.

"While I was in town," said one of his friends, "it was pleasing to hear only one subject talked of, 'the beloved Gaius' and his goodness, and the grace from whence it all flowed."

The testimony of his young connection, Mr. Wilberforce, may here be added:—

"In Bath died all that was mortal of John

Thornton. It was by living with great simplicity of intention and conduct as a Christian, more than by any superiority of understanding or of knowledge, that he rendered his name illustrious. He devoted large sums annually to charitable purposes, especially to the promotion of religion. He assisted many clergymen, enabling them to live in comfort and practise a useful hospitality. His personal habits were remarkably simple. He died without a groan, in full view of eternal glory."

"Poets attempt the noblest task they can,
Praising the Author of all good in man;
And next, commemorating worthies lost,
The dead in whom that good abounded most.

"Thee, therefore, of commercial fame, but more
Famed for thy probity from shore to shore,
Thee, Thornton! worthy in some page to shine,
As honest, and more eloquent than mine,
I mourn; or, since thrice happy thou must be,
The world, no longer thy abode, not thee,
Thee to deplore were grief misspent indeed;
It were to weep that goodness has its meed;
That there is bliss prepared in yonder sky,
And glory for the virtuous when they die.

"What pleasure can the miser's fondled hoard,
Or spendthrift's prodigal excess afford,
Sweet as the privilege of healing woe,
By virtue suffered, combating below?
That privilege was thine: Heaven gave thee means
T' illumine with delight the saddest scenes,
Till thy appearance chased the gloom, forlorn
As midnight, and despairing of a morn.

Thou hadst an industry in doing good,
Restless as his who toils and sweats for food.
Avarice in thee was the desire of wealth
By rust imperishable or by stealth ;
And if the genuine worth of gold depend
On application to its noblest end,
Thine had a value in the scales of heaven,
Surpassing all that mine or mint had given.
And though God made thee of a nature prone
To distribution boundless of thine own,
And still by motives of religious force
Impelled thee more to that heroic course,
Yet was thy liberality discreet,
Nice in its choice, and of a tempered heat ;
And though in act unwearied, secret still,
As in some solitude the summer rill
Refreshes, where it winds, the faded green,
And cheers the drooping flowers, unheard, unseen.

" Such was thy charity ; no sudden start,
After long sleep, of passion in the heart,
But stedfast principle, and, in its kind,
Of close relation to the eternal Mind,
Traced easily to its true source above,
To Him whose works bespeak His nature, love.

" Thy bounties all were Christian, and I make
This record of thee for the gospel's sake ;
That the incredulous themselves may see
Its use and power exemplified in thee.

Nov., 1790. COWPER.

" Yet was thy liberality discreet."

This was very true, for John Thornton had a family ; he had sons to establish in the world ; and if, amidst all his other charities, he had neglected to provide suitably for them, he would have been very

culpable. But it was not so. He did not hoard for his children; he did not seek to make them richer men than their father had been, as is the wont of wealthy men, but he put them into suitable positions, and gave each enough to make his own way in life. At his death, in fact, he left to be divided amongst them a sum about equal to that which he himself had inherited.

Of course, it followed that no one of them was as wealthy as the father had been; yet, so far as appears, they were quite content, and this, no doubt, because he had made them the sharers of his benevolent schemes; because he had judiciously taught them the right use of money and the happiest way of spending it.

There are abundant proofs that the virtue of liberality did not expire in the family when the head of it was called to his reward; but we know most about his third son, Henry Thornton, who was richly endowed with it.

Just as his father had been throughout his life the friend of Henry Venn, so was he closely united in friendship and in sympathy with the son of that venerable man—John Venn, the rector of Clapham. And perhaps in some respects these two younger men of the second generation were alike in character. Their fathers had been distinctly *leaders;* but neither of the sons could be exactly so described. Of Henry Thornton Sir James Stephen says, that "apart, and sustained only by his own resources, he would neither have undertaken nor conceived the more noble of

those benevolent designs to which his life was devoted;" and this because, "though possessed of a fine, almost fastidious taste, he was yet destitute of all creative imagination, and had not that moral courage which exults in struggle with danger." In short, he had not his father's enterprise, nor his enthusiastic nature, though he had many other excellent qualities —and qualities which were, perhaps, to be read in his rather striking countenance, his scrutinizing eyes, beneath brows serene and capacious, and in his lips, which always seemed prepared to speak, and yet to speak wisely. He, too, was one of the Clapham worthies; but he was also for thirty years a member of Parliament; where, like Wilberforce, he sat as an independent member, and never once gave a party vote. He was a Whig and a supporter of Reform and Toleration; but he did not often speak.

He wrote, however, a good deal; and amongst other things, a volume of family prayers; but nothing likely to descend to posterity. A deeply pious, but a somewhat reserved man as to religious matters was Henry Thornton; and he was blessed with a peaceful and happy domestic life, into which, in his own family circle, though he had nine children, death never entered during his life-time. But he, like his father, thought only of providing things honest and suitable; and whilst he aimed not to diminish, he made no effort to increase the patrimony which had come to him.

So, whilst a single man, the poor received about six-sevenths of his income; and when he became the

head of a family he decided that one-third of it was the right proportion for him to give away.

But his heart, like that of his father, was ready for noble deeds. He had but to perceive where by liberal help he could do real good, and at once, and without grudging, he came forward to the necessary extent.

An instance of this occurred in connection with the ministry of his father's old friend, Mr. Newton. At his church there was present one Sunday a young man who was in considerable anxiety of mind, and who was soon led to open his heart to Mr. Newton. This was Claudius Buchanan, a man afterwards well known in connection with Christian work in India. And when, some time after, he felt a desire to enter the ministry, but had not the means to carry him through college, Mr. Henry Thornton took the whole expense upon himself.

Sir James Stephen relates the following instances of his disinterested generosity:—

"Tidings of the commercial failure of a near kinsman embarked him at once on an inquiry how far he was obliged to indemnify those who might have given credit to his relative in a reliance, however unauthorized, on his own resources; and again the coffers of the banker were unlocked by the astuteness of the casuist.

"A mercantile partnership, which without his knowledge had obtained from his firm large and improvident advances, became so hopelessly embarrassed, that their bankruptcy was pressed on him as the only chance of averting from his own house the

most serious disasters. He overruled the proposal, on the ground that they whose rashness had given to their debtors an unmerited credit, had no right to call on others to divide with them the consequent loss. To the last farthing, therefore, he discharged the liabilities of the insolvents, at a cost of which his own share exceeded £20,000."

That one who so remembered the claims of the poor and needy, whose sense of justice and of mercy was so high, should be blessed with a home which his presence always sufficed to render happy, is a fact in which most persons will rejoice.

Henry Thornton, moreover, seems to have been a man who was thoroughly mixed up with almost every good cause, and who was a friend of all those excellent men of the day who were bound together by religious sympathies. It may be mentioned here that he was travelling with Cowper's friend, young Mr. Unwin, when the latter was taken ill with fever at Winchester, and died.

His was truly a saint-like character, and the example which he had witnessed in his father he handed down to his children,—an inheritance far richer than that of any amount of silver and gold.

As a "lover of good men," as a worker together with Wilberforce, Buchanan, Venn, and many other worthies, who were wont to meet in the library in his Clapham villa, and discuss plans for the reformation of abuses, and for the diffusion of the gospel of Christ, they would ever think of him; and blessed are such memories.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN NEWTON.

1725—1807.

"One of the most devoted and single-hearted of Christian ministers."—*Lecky.*

A MAN far better known to later generations, on account of his very remarkable story and the nature of his talents, was Mr. Thornton's friend, John Newton, his junior only by five years, but his survivor by many more; and while we know next to nothing of the childhood and youth of that faithful steward of this world's goods, we know a great deal—we seem, indeed, to know everything about the life of the much-loved old John Newton, from its very beginning to its close; so fully has he himself told us of the changes and chances of his eventful early years, with all their follies and sins, and the subsequent reformation, as well as the most interesting parts of what followed; and so many were there to testify of the rest.

Those of us whose fortune it has been to have aged relatives and friends, are probably familiar with his name; for though the fellow-labourer of most of the excellent of the last century, he yet lived on for

seven years into this wonderful nineteenth, in which we are so largely reaping the benefits of the earnest labours of such as he. He was born in 1725, living, therefore, in the time of which Sir William Blackstone wrote, when he said that, "having a curiosity to know how matters stood in regard to religion, he went to every London church of note, but did not hear one discourse that had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero; so that he could not have discovered from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, or of Mahomet, or of Christ."

But John Newton had a pious mother, one of those hidden ones whose very existence proved that vital Christianity had not wholly perished out of the land, and the desire of whose heart it was that her darling and only child should grow up to be a minister of the everlasting gospel. She was a Dissenter, it is true, yet could she have seen him some half-century later, standing in a Church of England pulpit, as one of the only two evangelical clergymen in London having churches of their own, and there holding forth the word of life to an audience that hung upon his lips, she would doubtless have given God hearty thanks on his behalf.

During her life-time we may think of her son as a pleasing child, always happy in his dear mother's society, and caring for no other; a forward child, too, who could read at four years old, and one whose mind was stored with many a simple piece of poetry, many a hymn, and many a passage of Scripture. He was

learning Latin before she died, and that, in her mind, with a view to the ministry; but she went to her rest before he was seven, and the warm-hearted little fellow perhaps never knew what it was to love or to be loved again, until he met with and conceived that strong and romantic affection for her who eventually became his wife, which proved in God's providence just the one thing which kept him from utter ruin.

He was cared for, it is true, by his stern-mannered and austere father as well as by his step-mother; and if the seed sown in his mind by his own mother had sunk into his heart, he would have possessed that which would have enabled him to stand;—to find his way through all the difficulties of his childish world, and to win love to himself.

But it had not; and therefore, though her words long proved a check, and in some measure a safeguard, yet that very love which had drawn out his, left him more subject to strong impulses, and in that way more open to temptation than many another.

Soon, poor child, he is the little schoolboy, crushed and disgusted with learning by a harsh and severe schoolmaster, until, a new and kinder usher coming to the school, he takes again to his Latin.

School days end for him, however, at the early age of ten; and next we see him the young sailor boy, going frequent voyages with his father, until he is placed with good prospects at Alicant in Spain, and might there have spent his life but for his unmanageable temper.

And then he is the youth, who causes perplexity to

his father, but who, through the interest of a friend, gets an appointment in the West Indies, whither he is just about to sail, when, while waiting for his ship, he is despatched on business into Kent, and visits some distant relatives but intimate friends of his mother; amongst whom he meets with and becomes desperately enamoured of that very girl whom his mother and hers had long ago, all unknown to him, destined to be his wife; and then, unable to bear the thought of so long a separation from her, he purposely stays in Kent too long, and lets the ship sail without him.

A voyage to Venice succeeds, and then another long visit to his beloved; and the next turn is that he gets impressed into the navy, just as war is about to break out, suffers great hardships, but soon, by his father's interest, is made a midshipman, and in a way to do well, had he not again ruined his prospects, and made an enemy of his commander, by overstaying his leave on two different occasions, when he had been suffered to land ere the coasts of his native land are lost to sight; so that on the second occasion he is pursued, brought back as a deserter, stripped, publicly whipped, and afterwards made weary of his life by constant harshness.

But another chance offers.

He one day sees a man preparing to leave the ship for the coast of Guinea,—vehemently craves, and to his delight obtains leave to go with him.

His idea this time is to make his fortune by buying and selling slaves; but he mismanages his own affairs, and soon finds himself instead in the service of a hard

master, and still harder and more brutal mistress. In after years he spoke of himself as having been then a very servant of slaves, and of his sufferings at that time as almost past belief. He is starved and ill, neglected and mocked in his sickness and misery; and yet, singularly enough, he even then finds a solace in the study of a Euclid which he has brought with him.

At length, when nearly two years had thus passed, an opportunity occurs of sending a letter to his father, and soon a ship calls to bring him off. Meantime, however, he has changed masters, and actually does not wish to return. In fact, he is only induced to do so by some fictitious tales of money left him by a relative; and then, with this revival of hope, there came a yet stronger one, that of again meeting his dear Mary Catlett, and so the young man sails with his friend.

So ends that sad chapter of John Newton's life, so far as regards outward things.

But it remains to trace his inner history, and see what sort of person that once loving and promising child had become.

During his boyhood, he says, he had many serious thoughts; and at four or five different times he could remember earnestly setting about to reform, and fancying himself religious. The last of these struggles continued for two whole years, during which he lived the life of an ascetic, praying, fasting, and continually mourning over his failures. But the then famous "Characteristics" of Shaftesbury falling in his way,

his old ideas were all upset, and he sank into a contemplative, indolent, and dreamy mood, caring to do nothing for himself; and in this state he continued until, on board ship, he met with one who soon became his intimate companion, a professed infidel, through whose conversation all his principles were undermined, and every sentiment broken down which could have proved any sort of restraint.

In fact, from the time of his degradation after his desertion, all care for what was good, all fear of God, all hope in life, seem to have left John Newton; and sinking lower and lower in vice and profanity, he became the ally of the evil one, by making it his chief study to drag others down with him into the mire of sin.

And the only thing not criminal which he appears to have desired—to see and possess the object of his affection, that young girl in Kent—seeming quite out of his reach, he sometimes thought of self-destruction, and his life was preserved more than once in a wonderful way.

Such a reprobate has very seldom been recovered; yet the "old African blasphemer," as in after-years he used to call himself, was not to perish. It was the will of God to bring him to himself, and to make him a monument of His long-suffering grace, that he might testify to others of His boundless mercy; and in his rescue from the coast of Africa we have seen the first step in the course of God's providential dealings for his recovery.

Men might have said, "Get him away, get him away at any cost from the scenes of his wickedness,"

and they might have tried to rescue him—as, indeed, they did try. But had he returned to England with his moral nature all unchanged, his friends could scarcely have rejoiced at his return; and most certainly it was beyond the power of man to change him. The change was, however, at hand, and it began before he left that ship.

We must dwell a little on that story.

It was a trading vessel collecting gold, ivory, dyer's wood, and bees-wax, in which he found himself a passenger, and one bound for a long voyage before it turned homewards. "I had no business to employ my thoughts," he tells us, "but sometimes amused myself with mathematics. Excepting this, my whole life, when awake, was a course of most horrid impiety and profaneness. I know not that I have ever since met with so daring a blasphemer: not content with common oaths, I daily invented new ones; so that I was very seriously reproved by the captain, himself a very passionate man, and not at all circumspect in his expressions."

This captain, he adds, would sometimes tell him that, to his great grief, he found he had a Jonah on board, and would attribute all his subsequent misfortunes to him.

Yet, on this voyage, and before the storm which proved the turning-point of his life, John Newton had experienced some marvellous preservations from death. It was only the day before that event that he carelessly took up one of the few books on board, Stanhope's "Thomas à Kempis," and as he read a few pages to

pass the time, the thought suddenly occurred to him, "What if all this should be true!" But he shut the book in haste, concluding that whether true or false he must abide the consequences; and easily banishing his apprehensions, he went to bed that night in his usual state of indifference, only to be awakened, however, by the force of a violent sea filling his cabin, and a cry from the deck that the ship was sinking.

In his own words, "the sea had indeed torn away the upper timbers, and made a wreck of her in a few minutes. With a common cargo she must have sunk, of course, but we had a quantity of bees-wax and wood on board, which were specifically lighter than water; and, as it pleased God that we should receive this shock in the very crisis of the gale, towards morning we were enabled to employ some means for our relief, which succeeded beyond all hopes."

All that night, however, were they working, in very cold weather, almost naked at the pumps, and using most of their clothes to stop the leaks; and whilst so occupied Newton had once tried to animate a comrade by remarking that in a few days this would be an adventure to talk over with a glass of wine; but the man addressed answered, "No, it's too late now."

About nine o'clock that day John Newton's first prayer was uttered. "If this will not do," he said to the captain in reference to some fresh expedient, "the Lord have mercy upon us!" "Why, I have not used words like those for years," he suddenly thought; yet as alone through many hours he worked at his

pump, the crust of his hardness began to give way, while the fear of death and what would follow stole over him.

Next day, the 10th of March, it was the same. His whole life seemed to pass before him, with his old impressions and professions, the calls and warnings, the many deliverances, and his heaped-up guilt.

"No hope, no hope, for such as I," was then his feeling, supposing the Scriptures to be true,—and several passages of the Bible which recurred to his mind seemed so exactly to suit his case that they appeared a presumptive proof of their divine original.

But with the first gleam of hope of being saved from drowning came the first gleam of a better hope.

Then he began to pray, to think of the Lord Jesus whom he had often mocked, though, as he now remembered, He died not for Himself, but for those who in distress should put their trust in Him. But now his old infidelity stood in the way, and he rather *wished* than believed that these things might be true.

However, he began to search the Scriptures; and the promise in St. Luke xi. 13, of the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who ask, was his first comfort. He put it to the test by asking; and then the words in St. John vii. 17, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God," encouraged him.

For four or five days, whilst the disabled ship sailed slowly on, the young man's whole leisure time was devoted to searching the Scriptures and to prayer. At one time there was a delusive appear-

ance of land, on seeing which they left off stinting themselves, and freely consumed the food that was on board. But the hope vanished; and they had to go on again with scarcely any victuals. The very last morsels were actually boiling in the pot, when at length the ship cast anchor in an Irish port.

Once the most hardened creature in the vessel, John Newton landed in an awakened state; and while no one else seemed to have received any abiding impressions, this was to him the beginning of a new life. He began to attend public worship, and became a communicant, though he himself tells us that he could not consider himself a believer in the fullest sense of the word until some time after. In his case, as in those of nearly all the leaders of the great revival, the passage from darkness to light was a gradual one, though, of course, there was a time when first the will was changed.

The vile African slave was now a reformed and respectable character; and one of his father's friends had no difficulty in getting him the offer of a ship to command; but he wisely preferred for the present the post of mate.

On landing after this eventful storm, he immediately wrote home to his father, who replied in two or three very kind letters; but as he was on the point of going out as Governor of York Fort, Hudson's Bay, the father and son never met again, though the father did all that he could for the son's happiness by paying a visit to Kent, and leaving his consent to the long talked-of union.

Nor was it long before the young man himself found means of renewing the old acquaintance, though few persons will wonder when he tells us, that after all that had passed he felt awkward in pleading his own cause. Just before sailing again for the coast of Africa, in his new capacity, however, he wrote, and though framed with "abundance of caution," the answer satisfied him. God had interposed, and his own and his mother's prayers were answered now; and yet there was to come one more fall. Going back in easy circumstances, and courted instead of despised, this much-forgiven sinner yet became a backslider. But even then he was not left to perish. God spoke this time through a fever, in the agonies of which his mind was struck afresh with terror and conviction of sin. "Surely, surely, for such a one there could be no hope!"

But once more comes the hope of mercy, and the peace after prayer. He was restored, to decline again in that manner no more. During his convalescence he took up his Latin and other studies to occupy his mind. Several wonderful escapes from sudden death succeeded; but at length he reached home and the beloved spot in Kent once more; and, to conclude this part of the story in his own words, "Every obstacle was now removed; my interest was established, and friends on all sides consenting, the point was now between ourselves, and after what had passed, was easily concluded. Accordingly our hands were joined on the 1st of February, 1750." And so, after all his seven or

eight years of waiting, John Newton became a married man at only five-and-twenty; and the union thus effected proved one of very unusual affection.

With a history like his, men would in our days have been for hurrying him into the sacred ministry, either with or without holy orders. *But God never hurries.* It was fourteen years from that time before he was called to preach that gospel which once he had derided and blasphemed; and at this particular time the idea had not even occurred to him.

He had to get his living and to maintain the long-desired wife, who had brought him no fortune; and in order to do so he followed his seafaring life. That seafaring life was, inconceivable as it may now appear to any reader, one connected with the slave-trade, in which very few people saw any moral wrong in those days. In after years, he bore his testimony against this horrible traffic; but at that time he felt no scruple, and only prayed to be placed in a more humane calling.

He was a young Christian, and though, as he afterwards said, "the first faint streak of early dawn had broken on him,—with her, young, cheerful, and surrounded by acquaintances, he believed it was not then daybreak." Several times he made voyages after his marriage, and though the separations were to him as bitter as death, they yet gave him time for thought and for much study.

The prayers just spoken of were answered, though in a way which he had neither desired nor anticipated. An apoplectic fit,—the only one that he ever had,

put an end to his seafaring life; and after some anxiety he obtained a situation as tide-surveyor.

The shock of his alarming seizure proved the beginning of a dangerous illness and of much subsequent indisposition to his wife; and so through anxiety and sorrow he was led onwards.

At sea he had read a good deal of Latin; he now began to study Greek and Hebrew, and to devote his life to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. And thus, without ever going to college, John Newton was unwittingly becoming trained for the ministry, which now at length some Christian friends suggested to him.

The idea was wholly new to him, and at first he was startled; but by and bye he came not only to fall in with his friends' wishes, but very earnestly to desire the sacred office for himself. He at first felt a difficulty about subscription, and thought of joining the Dissenters, but Mrs. Newton always opposed that plan; and his doubts disappearing after mature reflection, he applied to more than one bishop for orders.

His applications were, however, refused; and a weary six long years of waiting intervened before he attained his heart's desire; during which time, however, he cultivated the gift of utterance which he had begun to feel that he possessed, by expounding in private houses, or by preaching in any chapel that was opened to him. Meantime he continued to wait on the Lord; and at length the way was opened. Through the influence of Lord Dartmouth, the Bishop of Lincoln was at length persuaded to ordain

him to the curacy of Olney, where in the year 1764 the long and much-blessed ministry of John Newton began.

To his wife's influence, under God, we should remember that we of the Church of England owe it that it was exercised within her pale.

"The influence of my judicious and affectionate counsellor," he wrote after her death, "moderated my zeal, and kept me quiet till the Lord's time came, when I should have the desire of my heart. Had it not been for her I should have precluded myself from those important scenes of service to which He was pleased to appoint me. . . . This was one of the reasons I have to praise God for the partner He has mercifully allotted me. She was useful to me through life, but perhaps in no one instance more essentially so than in the prudent use she made of her affection to me, and of mine to her, at this period."

John Newton was in the thirty-ninth year of his age when he entered on the Olney curacy, of which place he had sole charge, on a stipend of £60 per annum; resigning for it his much more lucrative situation in Liverpool, at which city he preached his first six or seven sermons, when he returned to fetch his wife.

But how did he live on £60 per annum? Well, with a delicate wife, all unaccustomed to roughing it, the thing was almost impossible even in those days. At least on that stipend alone they must have lived so poorly and privately that Mr. Newton would have been greatly restricted in his means of doing good; and indeed his faith was tried. However, by the

grace of God he was made willing to put his wife's case and his own into God's hands, saying, "I see all I want in His promise, and though I see not the way of communication, He can find it."

We have seen in the last chapter how the excellent John Thornton became the instrument of relief, and how he supplied his friend with £200 per annum in order that he might be free to exercise hospitality and take care of the poor.

After all it was but a quiet sphere to which he had been called; and almost directly, friends wanted to get him away. Perhaps a younger man, and one less modest, would have easily yielded to the suggestion of a wider sphere at Hampstead. But by this time John Newton was no novice. He had learned to follow instead of trying to lead—if one may so speak—the providence of God.

"I sometimes imagine myself changing my place," he said, "possessing a good provision in a genteel neighbourhood,—many friends to smile upon me, perhaps some persons of distinction to take notice of me; and I think again that this is the very situation the devil would wish me in; for then he would bring many new batteries to play upon me. If the Lord calls me into danger He can preserve me in it; but I must be well satisfied that it is His will and His doing before I think seriously about it."

So for fifteen years he laboured on in the quiet country town of Olney, where he could soon write to his friends of growing congregations, of many awakened, and of larger and yet larger numbers of

communicants. The church became too small for the people, and the new pastor had to plan and collect for a new gallery. With the children also he took much pains, for he was ever a lover of children. He set up a weekly service for them especially, something of a catechetical nature; and very soon the number amounted to as many as a hundred and seventy, with some lookers-on. He was an extempore preacher, and, as he told his friends, by no means one who never broke down. His occasional failures he took, however, as part of the discipline good for him; and on one occasion, when his mind became so confused that he could only talk nonsense, he said, "I thought it my duty to tell the people that I could not preach, because the Lord had suspended His assistance. When I had made this acknowledgment I had liberty again, only I could not resume the subject I had been upon, but I spoke freely on what had happened; and perhaps it was one of our best opportunities. It was so to me. My pride was kept down, my mind perfectly composed; and I went home as easy as if the whole parish had admired my sermon."

Mr. Newton had been known as a writer before he went to Olney, having published a volume of sermons at Liverpool, and also his "Letters of Omicron." His "Narrative" came out soon after his ordination, and through it, as would appear, he became acquainted with Mr. Thornton, to whom he sent a copy, and who accompanied his reply with a handsome cheque, and soon after paid him the visit already

alluded to, when on leaving he promised £200 per annum to enable the pastor of Olney to exercise hospitality and benevolence to the poor. And thus was Mr. Newton's faith justified to all, and doubtless greatly strengthened.

One reason for which he seems to have been sent to Olney was, that he might be the friend and comforter of the poor afflicted poet Cowper, as well as his coadjutor in the composition of the well-known Olney Hymns. But the publication of the work was delayed by the poet's second serious mental attack; and before he had fully recovered Mr. Newton had accepted the rectory of the united parishes of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch, presented to him by Mr. Thornton.

This is perhaps the best place for introducing one or two specimens of Mr. Newton's hymns.

"One there is, above all others,
  Well deserves the name of friend!
His is love beyond a brother's,
  Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love.

"Which of all our friends to save us
  Could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
  Reconciled in Him to God;
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a friend in need.

"Men when raised in lofty stations
  Often know their friends no more;
Slight and scorn their poor relations,
  Though they valued them before:

But our Saviour always owns
Those whom He redeemed with groans.

"When He lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was His name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same:
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

"Could we bear from one another
What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
Loves us though we treat Him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

"Oh for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above:
But when home our souls are brought,
We shall love Thee as we ought."

And this other is very characteristic:—

"Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil;
All we can boast till Christ we know
Is vanity and toil.

"But where the Lord has planted grace,
And made His glories known,
There fruits of heavenly joy and peace
Are found, and there alone.

"A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pard'ning love,
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.

"To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable, divine!

"These are the joys that satisfy,
And sanctify the mind;
Which make the spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind.

"No more, believers, mourn your lot;
But if you are the Lord's,
Resign to them that know Him not
Such joys as earth affords."

We have not space to give many specimens, but any who care to look into the matter will find that John Newton was the author of many favourite hymns.

When the offer of the living of St. Mary Woolnoth came to him, he was in a state of much perplexity and distress, in consequence of a desperate outbreak of opposition from a large party in the town who had always given him much trouble; and putting the two circumstances together, Mr. Newton felt that the hand of God was in the matter; and therefore with a sore heart he quitted the first sphere of his ministerial labours, and left his people to learn in some other manner the lessons which they had refused from him; grieving greatly, however, that the man appointed to succeed him was an Antinomian, and therefore sure to do much harm to people of such a temper.

London, as he said, was the last place that he would have chosen for himself; for, like his friend Cowper, he was a lover of rural scenes; and perhaps also, he did not feel himself suited to city life.

But there are cases in which, whatever we may think of ourselves, the great Shepherd and Head of the Church so evidently speaks, that His servants have no choice in the selection of their own path of life.

Mr. Newton felt this to be one of them. Accordingly we have now to follow the subject of this sketch through the most important part of his career.

It was at a time when God was visiting London with many calls and messages of mercy, that he was summoned thither to take a prominent part in the work going on. And when we look back on that period we see that words such as Sir William Blackstone had used awhile before, would by that time have been scarcely appropriate.

Already had Romaine lived down the opposition which was so bitter in his early ministry—already was he the honoured rector of St. Anne's, Blackfriars; while at the Lock, and in a Church of England chapel in Westminster, as well as by several lecturers in various parishes, the truth was faithfully preached.

Those were the days, too, in which the Tabernacle and Tottenham Court Chapel, which were in the hands of Whitefield's trustees, were served by whatever evangelical men offered, whether Churchmen, Dissenters, or laymen. Lady Huntingdon's very large chapel was always well supplied, and old John Wesley often ministered in his chapel in the City Road.

This is Newton's own account on coming up to be the second evangelical rector: he did not entertain a

very high opinion of the Nonconformists of the day, but spoke well of some of the Moravians; and remarked in conclusion, that the number of evangelical clergymen in the country was every year increasing.

It was at the close of 1779 that Mr. Newton began his work in London; that is, just ten years before the French Revolution. Most terrible times were therefore at hand; but we can see now that it was the will of God to preserve England from joining in the sins, and suffering from the political earthquake which was about to shake all Europe; and still more we see that it was the will of God that our country should be singled out as His chief instrument for freeing the slave, for leading the way in many a reform by which the human race was to be benefited; and above all, to be the herald of peace through the blood of Christ's cross, in many of the dark places of this earth.

In all these things England was to stand out as an example to other lands; many of which indeed soon followed in all these great projects.

No one could have guessed, in 1779, where England would stand to-day; but any observing eyes might have seen that, especially in London, which was the very heart and soul of the nation, a vast machinery for good was being called into operation.

Is it too much to say that it was through this machinery that our land was saved, and what is more, gradually moulded into what she has since become?

After all it was as yet only a few men who were employed in this mighty work; but then each one was a man of mark. We may criticise their characters now, and if so disposed, try to find out the blemishes in each; just as we may criticise the twelve who once on a time, some eighteen centuries back, were set to work out such a revolution as the world had never before seen; yet in each case the great fact remains, that a marvellous change was wrought.

London, at the end of the eighteenth century, was, be it remembered, no more than about a fifth part of its present size, and therefore men were far less lost in it than they are now-a-days. So when John Newton came to town, he was in some sense an influence throughout the metropolis. And what is more, he was just the man there wanted. A John the Baptist London had in old Wesley, who had not only his one large chapel, but also several smaller ones; a learned and accurate preacher it still had in Romaine; but a genial, approachable, familiar, and loveable man was yet greatly needed for other and still larger classes of men; and so John Newton, that man with a history strange enough to draw attention of itself, was brought to St. Mary Woolnoth, a church in the very heart of the City, close to the Royal Exchange and close to the Bank of England; and for his parishioners he had wealthy merchants and substantial tradesmen, who lived, for the most part, according to the custom of those times, at their own houses of business.

A man with learning, but not the learning of the

college, a self-taught man, a man with plenty of literary tastes, yet one who had known rough life in the world, and who understood, too, what business was,—a man who had been recovered from a very low condition indeed, yet who had been given full time to make proof of his recovery, and who himself could stand forth therefore as a manifest evidence of the grace of God;—all this was John Newton.

Romaine's peculiar talent was not in parochial visitation, but Newton's was. He was a sociable man, and one who loved to have personal intercourse with his people.

Romaine was abrupt, sometimes almost repelling in his manner. When asked a question he would perhaps answer, "I have said all that I have to say on that subject from the pulpit."

But Newton loved to have troubles and difficulties brought before him. "Being," says one of his biographers, "of the most friendly and communicative disposition, his house was open to Christians of all ranks and denominations. Here, like a father among his children, he used to entertain, encourage, and instruct his friends; especially young ministers or candidates for the ministry."

But he never, to his dying day, forgot what he had been; and he would sometimes dwell upon the remembrance in characteristically energetic language. "That one," said he, "of the most ignorant, the most miserable, and the most abandoned of slaves, should be plucked from his forlorn exile on the coast of Africa, and at length be appointed minister of the

parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world, is a fact I can contemplate with admiration, but never sufficiently estimate."

It had not been his wish to come to town, for, like his friend Cowper, he delighted in rural scenes and country life. "I am now in London," he wrote to a friend, "the last place I should have chosen for myself; but the Lord, who led me hither, has reconciled me so far, that I seem now to prefer it to the country. My apparent opportunities for usefulness are doubtless much enlarged, and here, as in a centre, I am likely to see most of my friends who are fixed in different and distant places, but who are, upon one occasion or other, usually led to London in the course of the year."

But it was matter of distress to Mr. Newton that so few of his more wealthy parishioners came to church at all. They were too much intent upon their wealth and merchandise to pay much regard to their new minister; but, as they would not come to him, he determined to go to them, by means of a printed address, in which he reasoned with them on the subject. "My concern," he said, "does not arise from a want of hearers. If either a numerous auditory or the respectable character of many of the individuals who compose it could satisfy me, I might be satisfied. But I must grieve while I see so few of my own parishioners among them."

His church was indeed crowded on a Sunday evening, and his congregation made up of persons of all parties. "I say little to my hearers of the things

wherein they differ, but aim to lead them all to a growing and more experimental knowledge of the Son of God, and a life of faith in Him," he wrote to a friend.

In the morning he preached shorter sermons, and perhaps more cautious ones. "I suppose I may have two or three bankers present, and some others of my parish, who may have been strangers to my views of truth. I endeavour to imitate the apostle. 'I became,' says he, 'all things to all men;' but observe the end: it was 'that I might by all means save some.'"

The circumstances of those awful times led some of his brethren to diverge into public matters. This Mr. Newton would never do. "When a ship is leaky," he said, "and a mutinous spirit divides the company on board, a wise man would say, 'My good friends, while we are debating, the water is gaining on us. We had better leave the debate and go to the pumps.' Looking at his ministry as a whole, however, it was Mr. Cecil's opinion that he appeared to least advantage in the pulpit, as "he did not generally aim at accuracy in the composition of his sermons, nor at any address in the delivery of them. His utterance was far from clear, and his attitudes ungraceful." But then he was so full of zeal and affection for his people that his regular hearers scarcely noticed those defects. And besides, he had such a happy way of illustrating his subjects, and such a power of adapting his preaching to the trials and experience of his people, that many preferred him to any other preacher.

His heart went forth to all good men, whether Churchmen or Dissenters ; but he loved order, and he loved his own church, so that he could not always act with some whom he esteemed as excellent persons.

He preached a great deal—three times a week in his own church, and often for his friends, even when past seventy years of age ; sometimes as often as six sermons in the week. He continued his regular course when past eighty, and when he could no longer see to read his text, it used to be remarked that he was nowhere so collected, clear, and lively as in the pulpit.

His ministerial visits were full of instruction, comfort, and liveliness. He had a rich fund of information and of anecdote, and he knew how to turn everything to the best account. But "his talents," says Mr. Cecil, "did not lie in the discerning of spirits," and he was sometimes greatly deceived ; for he could not bear to think ill of any one. "'He is certainly an odd fellow, and has his failings ; but he has great integrity, and I hope he is going to heaven,' he said of one ;—whereas all who knew the man thought he should go first into the pillory."

At the same time he never hesitated to speak plainly to all within his influence. "You are in danger," he would say. "The world is gaining upon you ; beware." But then he would do it in such a way as seldom to give offence.

In his book entitled "Letters of Omicron," Mr. Newton described the three stages of growth in religion ; from the blade, the ear, and the full corn

in the ear, distinguishing them under the letters A, B, and C. He one day got a letter from a conceited young minister, telling him that he read his own character accurately drawn in that of C. Mr. Newton wrote in reply, that he had forgotten till now to add that C never knew his own face.

On one occasion Mr. Newton paid a visit to a friend who prided himself on extreme accuracy in his sermons. He heard him preach ; and on that occasion the good man spent nearly an hour in insisting on several nice and laboured distinctions in his subject. Afterwards, having a high opinion of Mr. Newton's judgment, he asked him whether he thought that these distinctions were full and judicious. Mr. Newton replied that he did not think them full, as a very important one had been omitted. "What can that be?" asked his companion ; "I had taken more than ordinary pains to enumerate them fully." "I think not," replied Mr. Newton, "for when many of your congregation had travelled several miles for a meal, I think you should not have forgotten the important distinction which must ever exist between meat and bones."

Another time, in coming out of church, a lady stopped him to say, "The ticket, of which I held a quarter, is drawn a prize of £10,000. I know you will congratulate me."

"Madam," said he, "as for a friend under temptation I will endeavour to pray for you."

Another time, hearing that a friend had met with great success in business, he went to call on him, and

told him plainly his fears for his spiritual welfare. Making no reply, his friend called down his wife, who came with her eyes suffused with tears, having just been sent for to a child out at nurse, supposed to be dying. Clasping her hand, he exclaimed, "God be thanked! He has not forsaken you. I do not wish your babe to suffer; but I am glad to find that He gives you this token for good."

Mr. Newton was a man of many friends, and perhaps those only knew him well who knew him in his home. That was indeed a house of love; for such was his nature that he could live no longer than he could love; and he welcomed every one who was in trouble or perplexity, all young ministers who wanted counsel, all brother ministers who sought Christian fellowship, into this inner circle of his life.

His devoted attachment to his wife, and her's for him, continued unabated up to the last day that they remained together upon earth.

Yet we read nothing of any special personal attraction about Mrs. Newton, in the eyes of people in general; but that she, like himself, must have possessed a kindly nature, seems evident from the fact that their servants were so well cared for, and that so much interest was taken in them that they never thought of leaving.

They had two nieces also living under their care, having no children of their own; and towards these girls Mr. Newton's heart was so drawn out that few children under a father's roof enjoy so much affection. One of them died young, leaving a very sad blank in the

house; but before her death she had given very decided evidences of grace; and during her last illness, such was her peace of mind and her sweetness towards every one, that Mr. Newton said, that he felt as if he would like to set the door of his house open, and invite people to come in, that they might see how a young Christian could die.

Mrs. Newton died of a cancer seventeen years before her husband; and it was mercifully ordered that a good deal of interesting work was brought before him soon after this sad bereavement. "When my wife died, the world seemed to die with her," he said. "I see little now but my ministry and my Christian profession to make a continuance in life for a single day desirable. . . . The Bank of England is too poor to compensate me for such a loss as mine. But the Lord, the all-sufficient God, speaks and it is done. Let those who know Him and trust Him, be of good courage. . . . Though I believe she has never been, and probably never will be, five minutes out of my waking thoughts, . . . I have not had one uncomfortable day nor one restless night since she left me."

In this strain he wrote to all his friends, of the way in which God comforted him. But, as he said, it was to work only that he henceforth cared to live; and he was soon much engrossed in a young convert, who eventually became one of the greatest benefactors to India with which that dark land has ever been favoured. This was Claudius Buchanan.

Something of Mr. Newton's influence over this

young man, as well as of what through his representations Mr. H. Thornton was led to do for him, has been related in the preceding chapter; but this is the proper place in which to tell the whole story.

Claudius Buchanan, then, was the son of the rector of the grammar school at Falkirk, and destined in his parents' fondest dreams to be a minister of the Church of Scotland; but he himself had very different ideas. He would be a second Dr. Goldsmith, and travel through Europe, supporting himself by playing, not on his flute, but on his violin; so, pretending that he had been engaged by a gentleman to accompany his son to the Continent, he left home and wandered about for a considerable time, maintaining himself as he had proposed—sometimes treated to refreshment by common people, at others, entertained in gentlemen's houses. "Sometimes," he said, "I had nothing to eat and nowhere to rest at night; but notwithstanding I kept steady to my purpose and pursued my journey. Before, however, I reached the borders of England, I would gladly have returned; but I could not; the die was cast."

He arrived at Newcastle, then embarked on board a collier for London, and being caught in a storm, began to reflect seriously on his situation.

Arrived in London, he suffered great misery, had to sell his clothes, and sometimes to sleep just wherever he could; till at length, in answer to an advertisement for a clerk to an attorney, he applied, got the situation, was liked, and made friends.

So once more he was able, by dint of extreme

economy, to appear as a gentleman, and even to enter into certain gaieties.

During this interval his father died. He had corresponded all the while at intervals with his mother, as from abroad.

But at length he began to come to his senses, and to write such words as the following in his diary: "I have lived, I know not how, in a state of forgetfulness or mental intoxication to this day;" and this feeling seems to have been strengthened by an attack of fever, to which some thoughts of amendment succeeded. His early habits caused him now and then to attend the house of God, and on one occasion he went with a young friend, who was so deeply impressed and alarmed by the sermon, that he rose and left the church. To this friend he afterwards believed he owed much. The change in Buchanan, however, was very gradual. Next year, in his diary, he mentioned a conversation with a religious friend, and that he himself kept a season of private prayer; but it was in the year 1790 that, as he believed himself, the turning-point came, in consequence of a conversation with another friend. Soon after he met with several of the best religious books of the day, and afterwards arrived at such a point as to write to his mother, requesting her prayers.

In reply she mentioned a good minister of whom she had heard,—Mr. Newton, of St. Mary Woolnoth; and on the receipt of that letter he very soon went to hear him, and afterwards addressed to him an anonymous letter, telling him with what avidity he had

listened in the hopes of being speedily relieved from his burden; "but," he added, "you say many things that touch my heart deeply, and I trust your ministry has been in some degree blessed to me; but your subjects are generally addressed to those who are already established in the faith, or to those who have not sought God at all. Will you not, therefore, drop one word for me? If there is any comfort in that word of life for such as I am, O shed a little of it on my heart. My sins do not affect me as I wish. All that I can speak of is a strong desire to be converted to God. Oh, sir, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and much more to the same effect.

No address, however, was given, and therefore all that Mr. Newton could do was to give an invitation, in church, to the writer of the anonymous letter to call at his home.

The invitation was soon accepted, and Claudius Buchanan wrote of his visit to his mother, that he had experienced such a happy hour as he ought never to forget. Perhaps some may ask, how did Mr. Newton deal with that case? It was by putting the narrative of his own life into the hands of the young man. And after that a close intimacy began between the pastor and the returned young prodigal, which lasted for life.

Nor was it long before the desire of his parents recurred to his mind; and was confided to Mr. Newton —Buchanan's strong desire to enter the ministry in the Church of England; but then, where were the means?

Mr. Newton, however, found a way out of the

difficulty. He introduced him to Mr. H. Thornton, who soon resolved to send him to Cambridge at his own expense.

The story of the young man's subsequent career is too long to be told here; but this must be added, that after becoming curate to Mr. Newton for a while Buchanan was appointed one of the chaplains of the East India Company, and that in India as a pioneer, and in heart a missionary, he did untold good, and perhaps more especially as the originator of a regular scheme of ecclesiastical organization, and as a leader in the crusade against all the false gods of India; added to which, it was his example and his writings which first put the idea of undertaking similar work into the mind of Adoniram Judson, one of the first of modern missionaries. These various links in the great chain of God's dealings in the communication of His grace should not pass unnoticed; for they show how one seed sown in a sermon, or in a conversation, or by the loan of a book, or the writing of a letter, may germinate. In this case we may trace several influences at work. The conversation with his religious friend awoke, and Mr. Newton's ministry fostered and cherished, the new life in Claudius Buchanan to whom India's millions owe so much. His writings moved the American Judson to his work in Burmah. The example of the latter drew many to follow him in labours amongst the Burmese, and also among those singular Karen tribes who dwell in the hill country of Burmah, and amongst whom so great a work has been accomplished.

But this influence over young Buchanan was just an example of the kind of work to which John Newton seemed especially called; and in London, where he so soon became a well-known preacher, those who were in spiritual trouble or anxiety generally found their way to him.

William Wilberforce, when he returned a changed man from the Continent, just in the same way sought his counsel; so did Hannah More desire his friendship, when feeling the nothingness of this world amidst all the enjoyment of its choicest pleasures, and longing for Christian society. It was not apparently on account of any spiritual perplexity that she sought him; for in her the great change seems to have come without the distress of mind which these young men experienced; but with the growth of the new life, she felt a yearning for Christian friends and for spiritual converse; and nowhere, it seems likely, could these be more freely enjoyed than in Mr. Newton's home circle.

Nor was it very surprising that between two such characters as those of Mr. Newton and Hannah More a warm friendship should spring up; or that the work which she and her sisters had taken up in the neighbourhood of Cheddar should excite his interest in the whole sisterhood.

In the course of their rambles, finding the poor of the neighbourhood immersed in deplorable ignorance and depravity, they resolved to supply their spiritual needs. So they set about establishing schools, which soon included 300 children; although the farmers

strongly opposed the movement, declaring that the country had never prospered since religion had been brought into it by the monks of Glastonbury. Undauntedly they persevered, and gradually they made their way. Afterwards, recognising the hand of God in the success of their undertaking, they extended their efforts. Finding two mining villages at the top of Mendip, even more ignorant and depraved than those at Cheddar, and so ferocious that no constable would venture into them to execute his office, these brave ladies carried their operations even into these; and soon, meeting with a good measure of success, they went on until they had established schools and simple services in ten parishes where there were no resident clergymen, —first obtaining leave from each incumbent,—until they found themselves carrying on a great missionary work

A remembrance of what he had seen at Cowslip Green, perhaps drew from Mr. Newton the following characteristic letter, written to Hannah More in his old age, in which, after congratulating her on recovery from a severe illness, he proceeds as follows:—" Before I knew whether you were so far recovered as to bear a visit from me, I heard that you had removed to Fulham. Thus I missed the pleasure of seeing you, and shall probably see you no more in this world. For though, I thank the Lord, my health and spirits are still good, I entered my seventy-fifth year almost a month ago, and I feel that the shadows of the evening are coming over me. However, I would be thankful

that I ever saw you, and especially that I had the privilege of seeing you at Cowslip Green. I remember that among the happiest days of my life. The recollection of it will be present while I retain my memory; and ere long I hope we shall meet before the throne, and join in the unceasing songs of praise to Him who loved us. There our joys will be unclouded, without interruption, abatement, or end! *O præclarum diem!* If old age gives me a prospect of death, sickness, like a telescope, often presents a clearer view; whilst it is, as I hope, with you still at a distance. Perhaps when you were ill you could perceive the objects within the veil more distinctly than at other times. I have known but little of sickness of late years. I attempt to look through the telescope of faith, which gives reality and substance to things not seen; but the glasses are cloudy and my hands shake, so that I can obtain but very imperfect and transient glances; but a glance into the heavenly state is worth all that can be seen here below in the course of a long life. If the Lord be with us—and He has promised that He will in the approaching transition —we may go forward without fears. Guilt and ignorance have personified death; they represent him with frowns on his brow and darts in his hand. But what is death to a believer in Jesus? It is simply a ceasing to breathe. If we personify it, we may welcome it as a messenger sent to tell us that the days of our mourning are ended, and to open to us the gate into everlasting life. The harbingers of death—sickness, pain, and conflict—are frequently

formidable to the flesh; but death itself is nothing else than a deliverance from them all.

"The apostle calls the body a tabernacle, or tent. When a tent is taking down, the removal of the boards or curtains will let in the light, quite new and different from what was seen before. . . . . Before the moment of death great discoveries are often made; and both the pious and the profane have strong intimations whither they are going, and with what company they will soon mingle. I have seen many instances of this; my dear Eliza was a remarkable one. Her animated language and joyful expressions could not be the result of a long experience, for she was a mere child; and I believe her knowledge of the Lord and His salvation was not a year old; but while the tent was taking down she appeared to see invisibles and to hear unutterables, which she certainly could find no words to express. How wonderful will be the moment after death! . . . . We use the word 'intuition,' then we shall know the meaning of it."

Like his friend Cowper, Mr. Newton was a good letter-writter; and in his younger years he often wrote with much vivacity; and that he looked on the writing of letters as one great channel by which he might do good, is clear from the pains bestowed on them, and from the certainly somewhat singular fact of his afterwards publishing some of what he had written.

For those to be found in his memoir alone, that work must be considered valuable. It is the fashion

of our day very much to decry Christian biography; and no doubt all biographies have a natural tendency to a laudatory style which should be guarded against. Moreover such works must, like other books, be read simply as what they are—mere human productions. Yet making all these deductions, from every well-written volume which tells the story of a saint of God, surely it must be true that lessons such as can be found nowhere else may be obtained, as we follow the narrative of one who has fought the fight and finished the course, through the grace that abounded in him or her.

After his great wound was healed by time, and by the comfort with which he was sustained, Mr. Newton's life flowed on peacefully for some years in the quiet exercise of his ministry, and it was brightened by the then hopeful aspect of the prospects of the Church. He was one whose heart was warmed by all the opening efforts to extend the kingdom of his dear Master, and naturally therefore he was one of the first Church Missionary Committee; and when the question of the slave trade was occupying the public mind, Mr. Newton's evidence was willingly given.

One who knew him well, the Rev. Richard Cecil, speaks thus of his personal character in his home:—"His conversation and familiar habits with his friends were more peculiar, amusing, and instructive than any I have ever witnessed." And he has treasured up for posterity some specimens of his "table talk."

The following are a few of these detached remarks.

"A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven; if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish."

"What some call providential openings are often powerful temptations. The heart, in wandering, cries, 'Here is a way opened before me;' but perhaps not to be trodden, but rejected."

"When a Christian goes into the world because he sees it is his call, yet while he feels it also his cross, it will not hurt him."

"Worldly men will be true to *their* principles; and if we were as true to ours, the visits between the two parties would be short and seldom."

"When we first enter upon the divine life, we propose to grow rich; God's plan is to make us feel poor."

"Don't tell me of your feelings. A traveller would be glad of fine weather; but if he be a man of business he will press on."

"I measure ministers by square measure. I have no idea of the size of a table if you only tell me how long it is; but if you also say how wide, I can tell its dimensions. So when you tell me what a man is in the pulpit, you must also tell me what he is out of it, or I shall not know his size."

"Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances."

"The men of this world are children. Offer a child an apple and a bank-note, and he will probably choose the apple."

"The heir of a great estate, while a child, thinks

more of a few shillings in his pocket than of his inheritance. So the Christian is often more elated by some frame of heart than by his title to glory."

One very heavy trial befel the good old man in his latter days. His niece, Miss Catlett, who after his wife's death had become the great object of his affectionate heart, love, and care—who had watched over him, walked with him, and visited with him wherever he visited; who had, when his sight failed, read to him, and even divided his food for him—she who seemed so entirely necessary to him that he could not do without her, was in the year 1801 attacked with a nervous disorder, which at length compelled him to submit to be separated from her for a time. Her complaint, in fact, for a little while took something like the form of poor Cowper's. She thought herself a detected hypocrite, over whom God's judgments incessantly hung. This trial lasted altogether a twelvemonth, and the weight of it seemed almost to overwhelm her poor old uncle. But at the end of that time Miss Catlett returned home, and having gradually recovered, she eventually married a member of her uncle's congregation.

It has been remarked by some persons as a fact worthy of comment, that two persons who came under Mr. Newton's influence were thus affected; but after all, is it so very remarkable? Is it so very uncommon that in the course of a long life two cases of insanity should be closely brought before a Christian pastor

Besides, Cowper had so suffered long before he knew Mr. Newton. It was evidently in him a constitutional disease; and after all, out of his whole life, ten of the brightest years formed a part of the period during which the two friends were in close intercourse.

In Miss Catlett's case we have not the particulars, and are not in a position to judge; so all that can be said, is, that there appears nothing either in his theology or in himself that could have had any possible connection with the trial; and there the matter must rest. John Newton was no stern high doctrinarian, but a practical common-sense Christian; and, moreover, naturally a very cheerful man; so that it is simply a matter of injustice to charge either of these cases on him.

It remains to notice the principal efforts of his pen. While at Liverpool, and before he had succeeded in obtaining ordination, he published some sermons with which he seems to have taken considerable pains, and which, says Mr. Cecil, "did credit to his understanding as well as to his heart;" and he adds that the facility with which he acquired the learned languages seemed to have been accounted for, by his being able to acquire so neat and natural a style in his own language.

He also wrote part of a "Review of Ecclesiastical History," of which Cowper said that he had always regretted that it went no further, and that in his judgment the style was incomparably better than those of either Robertson or Gibbon.

He published one collection of his letters under the title of "Cardiphonia," and this, from evidence that came to him, he himself esteemed the most useful of his works. Then there was his "Apologia, or Defence of Conformity;" his "Memoirs of the Rev. J. Cowper," brother to the poet; and of the "Rev. Mr. Grimshaw," of Haworth, Yorkshire; and last, but not least, his "Olney Hymns," composed in conjunction with his friend Cowper, but of which, owing to the poet's illness, he was forced to write the greater part.

Mr. Newton declined very gradually. When over eighty years of age, some of his friends, fearing that he might continue his ministrations too long, suggested that he should consider his work of preaching as done. His answer was, "I cannot stop. What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?"

In his own words, "satisfied with the Lord's will," he departed this life on the 21st of December, 1807, having written his own epitaph, and requested that it might be placed near his vestry-door, and that no other might be added.

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM COWPER.

1731—1800.

"The representative poet of his age."—*Preface to the Clarendon Press edition of Cowper's Poems*, 1878.

"THE most popular poet of his time, and the best of English letter-writers." This is Southey's verdict on Cowper; and when it is taken into account that Cowper was really the evangelical poet of the great evangelical movement—a movement with which Southey did not altogether sympathize, this verdict of his must be reckoned to be one of a capable and an unbiassed judge.

Every age has its own poets, and so perhaps has every religious movement; and Cowper had some remarkable contemporaries. Southey himself came a generation later; but Thomson's "Seasons," Young's "Night Thoughts," and Beattie's "Minstrel" were all new books, and largely read in Cowper's time. They are now comparatively neglected, but still his works may be found in almost every library in the kingdom, whether great or small. Probably they will still be read to some extent when the writings of certain

later poets, which have had even a greater popularity, shall be all but forgotten; and for this reason, amongst others, that Cowper's writings, though full of thought, of feeling, and of faith, are not abstruse or metaphysical. On the contrary, they are full of common sense and common truths,—that is to say, of truths which are common to all, and which have an equal interest for peasant or for peer,—for the most unlearned and most learned man.

Can we not see that this was just the kind of poet who was needed in that day, that there was a particular niche which required filling, and that he was just the man to fill it?

A revival of faith was taking place, and all classes alike were feeling its influence. There was wanted some one to put into words the thoughts that were filling many minds, and to lead the songs of this mixed multitude; and all this Cowper did.

He comes before us, then, as another living proof of the divine origin of the whole great movement—another evidence that one Master Mind was at work, and moulding the workers according to His own great will. Nor does the fact that a mystery, a painful mystery, enveloped most part of poor Cowper's life and being, in the least militate against this assertion, but rather the contrary. We cannot expect to understand all that our God is doing. A child cannot comprehend all his parents' acts; he naturally often asks 'Why?' and is perplexed: and how much more naturally must we expect to be sometimes confounded with the doings of the great Father of all!

The mystery, and the sadness of it, however, certainly drew attention to the utterances of this His messenger at the time when he spoke; and if so, then a little glimmer of light comes to our aid. Cowper was not inspired in the sense in which we use the expression in speaking of the sacred Scriptures. He had no new message from God to bring us; but God has other messengers besides those to whom He appeared in visions and revelations in the olden times; and if he gave to Wesley a message to deliver, and to Whitefield another, to Venn and Newton again similar commissions, so surely did He also give to William Cowper some words to speak for Him.

All poets who acknowledge a God at all, probably consider themselves to be God-made; and so, as far as regards the possession of a power which He has bestowed, they doubtless are. But it is in a far different sense, and a far higher one, that the term may be applied to Cowper; and that sense will appear as the events of his life, and the manner in which he came to be the poet that he was, pass under review.

William Cowper, the handsome and well-born young man, with tastes and manners that were pleasing both to men and women, is generally known as having been in particular the friend of John Newton; but a large portion of the lives of the two men had passed before they met at all; and when they did meet, Cowper was already one with his future pastor and friend in most of his views of

divine things. He was therefore not in any sense his disciple.

Superior to him by birth, by educational advantages, and in a certain way in mental powers too, Cowper was, however, Mr. Newton's junior by a few years, and as regarded his spiritual life by very many; so that there was really no bar to their friendship, but the contrary.

And it is rather singular that in childhood both passed through similar trials. Each lost his mother —and a tender mother in each case—before he was seven years of age; each had sharp sorrows in his early schooldays,—Newton under a harsh schoolmaster, and Cowper through the cruel persecutions of a brutal lad of fifteen, who was expelled when his conduct was discovered.

Most of us probably have sorrowed with the little boy who, looking back in after years on his first deep grief, wrote,—

> "My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
> Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
> Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,—
> Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
> Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
> Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss.
> Ah! that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes.
> I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial-day,
> I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
> And, turning from my nursery window, drew
> A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!"

But we have not so often pictured the little delicate and already melancholy child sitting all alone on his

form, and ready to weep at the thought of what he had suffered from his cruel persecutor, though he dared not tell of the persecutions; and at last removed from school with injured eyesight which compelled a long course of treatment under an oculist.

The sorrows of children are happily soon forgotten, yet do they leave their mark much longer than is sometimes supposed,—frequently perhaps, as it may be in this case, for life.

Nevertheless Cowper's next school experience, his eight years at Westminster, seem to have been a tolerably happy period. He tells us himself, in a brief memoir which he wrote, that if at that time he knew not what true happiness was, he was at least unacquainted with its opposite. He must then have had something like good spirits too, for in those days he excelled in cricket and football. Judging by the many tokens of a well-stored mind, he must have worked with some energy at his studies also; and, moreover, at Westminster he discovered to some degree his poetic gift, for in his "Table Talk" he says,—

> "At Westminster, where little poets strive
> To set a distich upon six and five;
> Where Discipline helps opening buds of sense,
> And makes his pupils proud with silver pence,
> I was a poet too."

Amongst his schoolfellows at Westminster, indeed, was Charles Churchill, afterwards a poet of some reputation, whose style Cowper much admired, and from whom he declared that he gained his own manner of versifying. At school, however, he did more than

try his own skill in that direction, for he studied the English poets with real enjoyment and delight, and more especially Milton and Cowley; and the former he got almost by heart.

Cowper's school-days lasted till he was eighteen; and we do not hear much of anything like real work after that for many a long year. His father was rector of Berkhampstead, and chaplain to George II. He could reckon an earl and a baronet among his connections, and some of his relatives were in Government posts; so, though he was sent to London to be in an attorney's office, it seems to have been rather with a view to picking up enough law to enable him to take any good post that might be got for him, than with the idea of his being a lawyer. At any rate, instead of spending his days at Mr. Chapman's, he for the most part spent them at his uncle's house in Southampton Row, in the company of his two young cousins, and of Thurlow, the future Lord Chancellor, "giggling and making giggle," and, as might have been anticipated, becoming enamoured of one of the girls,—the younger, Theodora, who was then only growing into what she afterwards became, an accomplished and attractive woman.

When the attachment was at length declared, however, the young lady's father refused his consent, on the ground that a marriage between cousins was not lawful —which was an idea then largely prevalent; yet perhaps it was really from a conviction, resulting from his own observation of the youth's character, that the match was not to be desired for his daughter.

This seems to have been for her a real heart-break, inasmuch as though then only about nineteen, she remained faithful, and in secret attached to her cousin through life. To him the disappointment was at the time very bitter; and it wrung from him the first verses which showed him to be a poet far beyond any ordinary mark; but in a few months he had greatly shaken off his grief, as most young men do, and though about the same time he lost his father, and also his most valued friend Sir William Russell, who was drowned while bathing in the Thames, yet none of these sorrows produced insanity, as might have been expected. They only drove him into a sort of literary dissipation, and the usual occupations of an idle Templar—for such he then was, having been called to the Bar in 1754.

In short, it must be said that all the years of Cowper's early manhood were wasted years. He spent them, perhaps, he hardly knew how, every now and then contributing papers to the Nonsense Club's periodical, and to the *St. James's Chronicle*, and in the writing of halfpenny ballads; certainly not in earnestly following any profession.

So in his thirty-second year he had nothing but his fast-diminishing little patrimony to depend on; and no hope seemed to remain but that of getting some appointment under Government. Yet even this was only a sort of vague and indefinite idea; and after all, it was not a kind of life for which he was fitted,—if indeed at that time he could be said to be fitted for anything.

When at last his relative, Major Cowper, did give him the choice of two appointments, Cowper at once chose the more lucrative, but instantly after, he was seized with such a morbid dread of responsibility that he felt as if he had received a dagger into his heart.

It was this circumstance, in fact, which drove William Cowper mad. In an agony of mind he very soon resigned the first, and accepted the less lucrative appointment, as the less responsible one. But the right of his relative to appoint to either was soon questioned; and Cowper was summoned to prepare for an examination as to his competency, at the bar of a parliamentary Committee. At this his horror of mind increased; his intellect gave way, and he made an attempt to strangle himself. So ended all idea of Government employ; but so did not end his horror of mind. "To this moment," he says, "I had felt no concern of a spiritual kind; ignorant of original sin, insensible of the guilt of actual transgression, I understood neither the law nor the gospel; the condemning nature of the one, nor the restoring mercies of the other. I was as much unacquainted with Christ, in all His saving offices, as if His blessed name had never reached me. Now, therefore, a new scene opened upon me. Conviction of sin took hold of me, especially of that just committed; the meanness of it, as well as its atrocity, was exhibited to me in colours so inconceivably strong, that I despised myself, with a contempt not to be imagined or expressed, for having attempted it. . . . A sense of God's wrath, and a deep despair of escaping it,

instantly succeeded. The fear of death became much more prevalent in me than ever the desire of it had been. My sins were now set in array before me. I began to see and feel that I had lived without God in the world. As I walked to and fro in my chamber I said within myself. '*There never was so abandoned a wretch! so great a sinner!*'"

His brother, hearing of his miserable condition, came to see him about that time, and at once consulted with some of his friends what was to be done with him. So at length it was decided to place him at St. Alban's under the care of a clever and kind-hearted physician, Dr. Cotton, with whom he had already some slight acquaintance.

This was in 1763; and there, in this lunatic asylum, lived for the space of eight months this poor young man, this future poet, in constant expectation and terror of instant judgment.

But at length, the sentence of condemnation seeming to be deferred, he began to think that he had better entertain a less horrible train of ideas, and accordingly entered into conversation with the doctor laughed at his stories, and told some of his own.

The doctor was not slow to see the amendment, and sent news to his brother at Cambridge, who very soon came to visit him. As soon as they were left alone together, John anxiously asked William how he was; but he only got for answer, "As much better as despair can make me." Then they went into the garden; and the younger brother protested so earnestly that it was all a delusion, that his vehemence

gave William a ray of hope. The glimmer increased; and very soon his servant perceived the change, and expressed to him his great joy. So, from this visit of his brother, Cowper dated his recovery. He awoke next morning feeling quite a new creature, and many of his delusions gone.

Still, as yet he knew nothing of the way of salvation, and only thought that if God would but spare him, he would lead a new life. Happily, however, Dr. Cotton was a Christian man, and he took care to leave Bibles about in his patient's way. One day, flinging himself into a chair, Cowper ventured to take one up and look into it for comfort.

In a moment his eyes lighted on the words, "Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

"Immediately," he said, "I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fulness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel. Whatever my friend Madan had said to me so long before, revived in all its clearness, with demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Unless the Almighty arm had been under me I think I should have died with gratitude and joy."

The whole interesting and remarkable account of this conversion in a lunatic asylum, and simul-

taneously, of the poor sufferer's bodily cure, is too long to give here. Suffice it to say that he remained with Dr. Cotton for some months longer, and did not leave until quite restored. During the interval he resumed the use of his pen, and having experienced the greatest of all changes himself, he was able to write a little about it.

The following lines were composed under Dr. Cotton's roof:—

"How blest Thy creature is, O God,
When with a single eye
He views the lustre of Thy word,
The dayspring from on high!

"Through all the storms that veil the skies,
And frown on earthly things,
The Sun of righteousness he eyes,
With healing in His wings.

"Struck by that light, the human heart,
A barren soil no more,
Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad
Where serpents lurked before.

"The soul, a dreary province once,
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire formed within,
And owns a heavenly reign.

"The glorious orb, whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first, obedient to Thy word,
He started from the goal,

"Has cheered the nations with the joys
His orient rays impart;
But, Jesus, 'tis Thy light alone
Can shine upon the heart."

William Cowper's London life was now at an end. He disliked the idea of returning to the scene of his old temptations; and yet, as for some years he had held one small post, the office of Commissioner of Bankrupts, worth about £60 per annum, he might have felt compelled to return to his duties, had not his awakened conscience told him that, ignorant as he was of law, he ought not to take the required oath.

Consequently he resigned the post, and asked his brother to seek some lodging for him in or near Cambridge.

But his brother, perhaps secretly not wishing to have a relation in his condition near him, could find nothing suitable; but he found a home for him at Huntingdon.

Thus, in the providence of God, was Cowper guided to the family who afterwards came to be to him far more than any of his own relatives, and to the care of that admirable woman who, for thirty years, proved his best earthly friend and most affectionate nurse.

It was at Huntingdon that the Unwins then lived; in fact, Mr. Unwin, the father, was master of the Free School there, and lecturer in two of the churches; and now John Cowper, having found suitable lodgings for his brother, saw him settled there, and left him with the man who had attended him at Dr. Cotton's, and whom he ever afterwards retained in his service.

It was not long before young Unwin, the son,

struck with the stranger's countenance, made his acquaintance; and to William Cowper's great joy, he found in him one who had lively and spiritual notions of religion, and who was then preparing for the ministry.

The young men, thus mutually attracted, opened their hearts freely to each other; and Cowper was soon introduced to the little home circle, consisting of the father and mother, this son, and a daughter.

It was a friendship formed for life; and, in short, it was not long before Cowper became an inmate of that household, by succeeding to the vacant place of a pupil who had just left. His own means were so small, and his family ties so few, that this was evidently a merciful provision for him; and more especially as his own relations for the most part drew off from him when they discovered the change in all his tastes and feelings.

Two years after this, the senior Mr. Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse, Miss Unwin was married, and her brother went to his ministerial work. Mrs. Unwin then wished to leave Huntingdon; but thus deprived of her own family ties, she had no desire or intention to be separated from the lonely young man who had grown to be to her as a son.

It was just at that time that, through a brother clergyman, Mr. Newton heard of Mrs. Unwin's recent bereavement; and at his request he called to see her. This visit led to the removal both of the widow and of Cowper to Olney, and to the beginning of the

intimacy between the warm-hearted, devoted pastor, and the now rejoicing Christian layman. Little marvel indeed was it that each of these two men felt himself strongly drawn to the other, considering the wonderful private history of both, and the remarkable character of their religious experiences. Very naturally would they take sweet counsel together, and walk into the house of God as friends; and besides, Cowper at once threw himself heart and soul into all Mr. Newton's parochial plans; and he was in many ways a great help to him, visiting the poor, and helping to distribute Mr. Thornton's bounty, taking part in a weekly prayer-meeting, and even entertaining thoughts of the ministry himself.

"The Lord brought him to Olney," said Mr. Newton, "where he has been a blessing to many, and a great blessing to myself."

Cowper was, in short, during those few happy years, a bright example of the comfort that Christianity can give, and of the way in which it drives men to work for others. But Cowper had a warm heart; and in it he had room for many friends; so, on his full recovery, he had a strong desire to renew his intercourse with some of the oldest of them; and whilst still at Huntingdon he had written to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, Theodora's elder sister, "You know not half the deliverances I have received; my brother is the only one who does; my recovery is indeed a signal one, but a greater, if possible, went before it. My future life must express the thankfulness I feel, for by words I cannot do it." In sub-

sequent letters he spoke more fully of the change which had passed over him; but Lady Hesketh, as yet only a woman of the world, could not enter into such matters. Although she several times wrote kindly, yet she soon dropped the correspondence, and going abroad with her husband shortly after, the intercourse was not renewed for eighteen years.

Another friend, Joseph Hill, Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, seems to have understood him better; and he remained his attached friend to the end of his life, and rendered Cowper the very important service of looking after his pecuniary affairs;—a great service for one like him, but no easy task. For the means which Mr. Hill had to manage were so extremely limited, that poor Cowper found it hard to get on at all, and impossible to keep out of debt. His last letter to him before his mind again completely lost its balance was full of this subject, and of plans for clearing off his debts.

To what extent these anxieties had preyed upon his mind it is impossible to say; but, probably, no other class of cares, no other kind of trial has so tended to fill our lunatic asylums, as those connected with monetary troubles. No doubt William Cowper now felt peculiarly incapable of helping himself; and though he did sometimes talk of taking pupils, the idea was quickly abandoned. He was not idle, however, but was working in what may be called his own peculiar way, when a second violent mental illness came on. For already had Mr. Newton engaged him to join with himself in producing

a volume of hymns suited both for public worship and private devotional meetings. Hymn-books did not abound in those days as they do now; and therefore the idea was a most valuable one, as indeed was the collection itself when it at length appeared; but this was not for some years after, as Cowper's second terrible illness intervened; and Mr. Newton probably postponed its publication, in the hope that his friend would recover and be able to do more for the work.

Looking back now it does appear, however, to have been *for his own sake* possibly a mistake, as such a work would naturally lead to more of retrospection than was good for one of his temperament. Yet it is easy to see how the idea would suggest itself to men working together as they were, and feeling the need of such a volume. Mr. Newton knew that his friend had some turn that way; but he did not know how splendid a gift he possessed, as he had not then produced any of his principal works. Otherwise, perhaps, Mr. Newton would have hesitated to associate himself with so distinguished a poet.

For the church at large it was providentially ordered that his reputation should not be made until this legacy was secured to it; and very ungenerous and unkind are those remarks which have attached the blame of the coming-on of this sad attack to the suggestor of the work; more especially as Cowper, since he became a true Christian, had hitherto been a happy man.

In his preface Mr. Newton says that besides the

promotion of the faith and comfort of sincere Christians, the volume was likewise intended as a monument to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship; and that when his friend was laid aside by a long and affecting indisposition, he "hung his harp upon the willows," and for some time thought himself determined to proceed no further without him, but that his mind was afterwards led to resume the subject.

Under those circumstances Mr. Newton's share of the volume was necessarily far the largest, and amongst his contributions to the volume are to be found some of our favourite hymns, for example—

"Begone unbelief,"

"Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,"

"Incarnate God! the soul that knows,"

"For mercies, countless as the sands,"

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,"

"Glorious things of Thee are spoken,"

&c., &c.

As for Cowper's share, it consisted of between sixty and seventy, amongst which it is really surprising how few could in any sense be called gloomy hymns. Take, for instance, the following:—

"Hark, my soul, it is the Lord,
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee:
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

"I delivered thee when bound,
And, when bleeding, healed thy wound;
Sought thee wand'ring, set thee right,
Turned thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease toward the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of My throne shalt be:
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

"Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is cold and faint:
Yet I love thee and adore;
O for grace to love Thee more!"

And this other:—

"The saints should never be dismayed,
Nor sink in hopeless fear;
For when they least expect His aid
The Saviour will appear.

* * *

"Wait for His seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait:
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late."

In fact, no hymn-writer, perhaps, has ever more beautifully expressed the true grounds of Christian faith, and hope, and joy; while some of his hymns

are in themselves pretty clear evidences of what he himself in his brighter days experienced, and seem to testify of his own realization at such times of the privileges of the true believer. Such are the following, of which the first lines only are given,—

> "I will praise Thee every day,"
>
> "My song shall bless the Lord of all,"
>
> "There is a fountain filled with blood,"
>
> "Jesus, where'er Thy people meet,"
>
> "I thirst, but not as once I did,"
>
> "Sometimes a light surprises,"

and many others, both poetical and very rich in spiritual truth, whilst others are eminently practical; in fact, were our hymn-books to be stripped of the productions of Cowper and Newton, they would be so lamentably impoverished that we should scarcely know them,—out of date, gloomy, or what not, though some may unthinkingly pronounce these hymns to be.

"God moves in a mysterious way," said poor Cowper, almost prophetically; and he himself perhaps never knew on earth the mystery of his own great sufferings.

He found some doubtful professors, it is true, amidst his quiet work at Olney. It is possible that whilst writing for them he began to doubt himself; at any rate, he broke down in 1773, ere the work was complete, and Satan was again permitted to suggest wild and terrible fancies to his mind.

At one time he thought that it was the will of God that he should offer up a sacrifice in imitation of the faith of Abraham—that sacrifice being himself; and under that impression he made another attempt to commit suicide; and when this attempt was frustrated, then he thought that he had sinned past all forgiveness, because he had not fulfilled the will of God. So he would neither pray himself nor be present at any place of worship, or even at family prayers, but sank into a state of utter despair, and into an unalterable persuasion that the Lord, after having renewed him in holiness, had doomed him to everlasting perdition. And yet, with all that despair about himself he never doubted the love of God to mankind in general. He had no doubts about the truth of the gospel or of the Bible; it was only his own part in the promises of which he despaired.

"Both your advice and your manner of giving it are gentle and friendly," he wrote to one good friend. "I thank you for them, and do not refuse your counsel because I dislike it, but *because it is not for me. There is not a man upon earth that might not be the better for it—myself excepted.*"

Cowper never seemed to lose the power of writing fine English, unless too ill to write at all—a rare occurrence, as composition was soon discovered to be the best remedy for him. Probably he had lived too quiet a life; and in reality now for a considerable period (except the poor people whom he visited) he had but two friends—Mrs. Unwin and Mr. Newton. Moreover Olney lay low, and was exposed to fogs

and mists for a good part of the year. His extreme fondness for all rural sights and sounds, and his love for these two friends, had no doubt hitherto prevented him from feeling painfully the dulness of the place; and so long as he continued to be cheerful and happy no one seemed to fear the effect of so monotonous a life on such a constitution as his. At length he fell into a weak and low condition; then for some time he refused to stir out of doors, until suddenly one day he resolved to visit Mr. Newton, and when once in his house no manner of persuasion could avail to induce him to leave it again for sixteen months; and Mr. Newton would not hear of coercion being employed. "The Lord has given us such a love for him, both as a believer and a friend, that I am not weary," he said, "though to be sure his deliverance would be to me one of the greatest blessings I can conceive."

Happily, however, he soon took to gardening, and would spend hours in that occupation, only appearing easy when so employed.

At length he as suddenly determined to return home, and then slowly began to recover. Some sympathizing neighbours about that time sent him a present of three hares, which afforded him much amusement, for he not only diverted himself by watching their gambols, but began to write about them, in both prose and verse. He had always been a scribbler; and one of the first marks of improvement in him was his return to his writing-desk.

At length, perceiving how well that kind of em-

ployment suited him, Mrs. Unwin suggested that he should compose something of importance.

He took her hint, and produced "The Progress of Error," towards the close of which occur these lines:—

> "The cross,
> There and there only is the power to save,
> There no delusive hope invites despair."

Afterwards he wrote "Truth," then "Table Talk," and a few months later, "Expostulation."

This latter poem especially is a wonderful production, as proceeding from the pen of one so secluded from the world, and one, too, who had for so long been wrapped up in his own sorrows; for it shows how much he had really dwelt on the condition and the dangers of his native land.

"Why weeps the muse for England?" he exclaims, then, dwelling on the long list of her advantages and comparing her state with that of Israel of old, he proceeds,—

> "When nations are to perish in their sins,
> 'Tis in the Church the leprosy begins."

And then he exposes the false theories and hollow excuses common in his day, and in fact preaches as good a sermon to the nation as any that it could well have heard, and concludes,—

> "Say not (and if the thought of such defence
> Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence),
> What nation amongst all my foes is free
> From crimes as base as any charged on me?
> Their measure filled, they too shall pay the debt,
> Which God, though long forborne, will not forget;

But know that wrath divine, when most severe,
Makes justice still the guide of his career,
And will not punish in one mingled crowd
Them without light and thee without a cloud."

By that time he had discovered that writing had a power of fascinating him beyond any other employment, and having begun he found it difficult to stop. The improvement in his condition is manifest from the interest which he then took in his work.

He said himself of "Table Talk," "It is a medley of many things, some that may be useful, and some that, for aught I know, may be diverting. I am merry that I may decoy people into my company, and grave that they may be the better for it. Now and then I put on the garb of a philosopher, and take the opportunity that disguise procures me to drop a word in favour of religion."

There was no difficulty in inducing Mr. Johnson, one of the first of London publishers, to undertake the risk of publication, but he wanted more matter to make a good volume; so our author set to work again and produced "Conversation," in which he begins in a strain of sound wisdom and sound sense, intermixed with a good deal of sarcasm on foolish talkers, and rises as he proceeds, up to that exquisite sketch of the "Walk to Emmaus:"—

"It happened on a solemn eventide,
Soon after He that was our Surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,
Sought their own village, busied as they went
In musings worthy of the great event.

They spake of Him they loved, of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife;
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The further traced, enriched them still the more;
They thought Him, and they justly thought Him, one
Sent to do more than He appeared t' have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else; and wondered He should die.
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end
A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them, with a kind engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged a share.
Informed, He gathered up a broken thread,
And truth and wisdom gracing all He said,
Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,
That reaching home, 'The night,' they said, 'is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.'
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And made so welcome at their simple feast,
He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, ''Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all He deigned to say?
Did they not burn within us by the way?' "

After a little time he wrote "Retirement," and the whole volume came out in 1782, from which year therefore dates Cowper's appearance before the world as a poet.

Soon after its publication he wrote the following:—

"To JOSEPH HILL, Esq.

"*February* 13 *and* 20, 1783.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—In writing to you I never

want a subject. Self is always at hand, and self with its concerns is always interesting to a friend.

"You may think, perhaps, that having commenced poet by profession, I am always writing verses. Not so. I have written nothing, at least finished nothing since I published, except a certain facetious history of John Gilpin, which Mr. Unwin would send to the *Public Advertiser*. Perhaps you might read it without suspecting the author.

"My book procures me favours which my modesty will not permit me to specify, except one, which, modest as I am, I cannot suppress—a very handsome letter from Dr. Franklin at Passy. These fruits it has brought me.

"I have been refreshing myself with a walk in the garden, where I find that January, who (according to Chaucer) was the husband of May, being dead, February has married the widow.—Yours, &c.

"W. C."

He began then to experience some pleasurable anxiety respecting the success of his book. He had a new object to live for; and, moreover, a very speedy and very agreeable result of the publication was that he was thus brought again to the remembrance of his family and some of his former friends, and so a renewal of intercourse took place.

"Dejection of mind," he wrote to his cousin Lady Hesketh, "which, I suppose, may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one." It was, in truth, a wonderful fact that it was

through Cowper's insanity that the world was put in possession of all his works—works full of all sorts of wholesome truths, of really religious morality, as well as of much actually religious poetry; and it is marvellous, as his published letters—models as they are of that kind of composition—show, how very little his power of writing was affected by his aberration of mind, though still now and then we get traces of his extreme nervousness, as, for instance, in the following to Mr. Unwin:—

". . . For my own part, when I write to a stranger I feel myself deprived of half my intellects. I suspect that I shall write nonsense, and I do so. I tremble at the thought of an inaccuracy, and become absolutely ungrammatical: I feel myself sweat. I have recourse to the knife and the pounce. I correct half a dozen blunders, which in a common case I could not have committed; and have no sooner despatched what I have written than I recollect how much better I could have made it; how easily and genteelly I could have relaxed the stiffness of the phrases, and have cured the unsufferable awkwardness of the whole, had they struck me a little earlier."

By and by Lady Hesketh paid him a visit, got to know of his pecuniary straits, procured him help, and then succeeded in removing him to the more cheerful situation of Weston Underwood, where he became intimate with the Throgmortons, and saw more society.

An anonymous donor, often supposed to have been Theodora, gave him at this time, an annuity of £50,

and altogether there was again a brighter period in his life.

"He that has written will write again," said a French author; and Cowper, alluding to it, remarked that he should probably soon attempt another volume.

His next volume was "The Task," the idea of which was suggested to him, as it would seem, haphazard, by a certain Lady Austen who had visited Olney, and was for a time a welcome and most familiar guest at Mrs. Unwin's.

The friendship was, however, of short duration; but the suggestion, "Oh, *you* can never be in want of a subject; you can write upon anything; write upon this sofa!" gave rise to that work which, as Southey says, "raised him to a rank in English poetry from which no revolution of taste can detrude him." It was Lady Austen also who told him the story on which his ballad of "John Gilpin" was founded, of which he once said, "The grinners at John Gilpin little think what its writer sometimes suffers. How I hated myself last night for having written it!"

"The Task" soon became a general favourite, and exercised perhaps as great an influence on the English mind as any English book ever did, whilst it set the former volume afloat.

To his friend Mr. Newton he wrote, about this time:—

"*January 5th*, 1785.

"I have observed, and you must have had occasion to observe it oftener than I, that when a man, who

once seemed to be a Christian, has put off that character and resumed his old one, he loses, together with the grace which he seemed to possess, the most amiable parts of the character that he resumes. The best features of his natural face seem to be struck out, that after having worn religion only as a handsome mask, he may make a more disgusting appearance than he did before he assumed it.

"According to your request, I subjoin my epitaph on Dr. Johnson,—at least, I mean to do it, if a drum, which at this moment announces the arrival of a giant in the town, will give me leave.

"EPITAPH ON DR. JOHNSON.

"Here Johnson lies—a sage, by all allowed,
Whom to have bred may well make England proud;
Whose prose was eloquence by wisdom taught,
The graceful vehicle of virtuous thought;
Whose verse may claim, grave, masculine and strong,
Superior praise to the mere poet's song;
Who many a noble gift from heaven possessed,
And faith at last,—alone worth all the rest.
O man immortal, by a double prize,
On earth by fame, by favour in the skies.

"Yours, WM. COWPER."

The following is interesting for several reasons. It is addressed to Lady Hesketh.

"DEAREST COUSIN,—My desk is always pleasant, but never so pleasant as when I am writing to you.

If I am not obliged to you for the thing itself, at least I am for your having decided the matter against me, and resolving that it should come in spite of all my objections. Before it arrived Mrs. Unwin had spied out for it a place that exactly suits it. A certain fly-table in the corner of the room, which I had overlooked, affords it a convenient stand when it is not wanted, and it is easily transferred to a larger when it is. If I must not know to whom I am principally indebted for it, at least let me entreat you to make my acknowledgments of gratitude and love. As to my frequent use of it, I will tell you how the matter stands. When I was writing my first volume, and was but just beginning to emerge from a state of melancholy that had continued some years (from which, by the way, I do not count myself even now wholly recovered), Mrs. Unwin insisted on my relinquishing the pen, apprehending consequences injurious to my health. When ladies insist, you know there is an end of the business, obedience on our part becomes necessary. I accordingly obeyed; but having lost my fiddle, I became pensive and unhappy; she therefore restored it to me, convinced of its utility, and from that day to this I have never ceased to scrape. Observe, however, my dear, that I scrape not always. My task that I assign myself is to translate forty lines a day; if they pass off easily I sometimes make them fifty, but never abate any part of the number. . . .

"Mr. Unwin is, of course, hearty in my cause; and he has several important connections. I have,

by his means originally, an acquaintance, though by letters only, with Mr. Smith, member for Nottingham. My whole intercourse with my bookseller has hitherto been carried on through the medium of his parliamentary privilege. . . .

"John Thornton the great, who together with his three sons, all three in Parliament, has I suppose a larger sweep in the city than any man, will, I have reason to hope, be equally zealous in my favour. Mr. Newton, who has a large influence in that quarter also, will, I know, serve me like a brother. I have also exchanged some letters with Mr. Bacon, the statuary, whose connexions must needs be extensive. Neither have I any doubt but that I can engage Lord Dartmouth. . . . All this I have said by way of clapping you on the back, not wondering that your poor heart ached at the idea of being almost a solitary lady errant on the occasion."

This is all in allusion to a new work undertaken, and chiefly at Mrs. Unwin's suggestion, because, as he himself says, she had discovered that to write was necessary to him; namely, a translation of Homer; and it was one chief recommendation to this work, that it naturally could not very quickly come to an end,—indeed, it occupied five years. It was published by subscription, the publisher agreeing to pay him £1,000 and leave the copyright in his hands.

Of course, there was also a good deal of pleasant excitement about all this; and so beneficial did his kind old friend perceive it to be, that when he had completed that work she strongly urged him to fall

in with the proposal of his publisher, and edit a new edition of Milton. He contemplated, but never carried out this design.

But Cowper could write smaller and lighter things too,—pieces on the rural sights and sounds in which he delighted, or on domestic and even facetious subjects. It was by means of this variety, no doubt, that he so quickly gained the ear and attention of the world at large. This, however, was not of his planning. He found himself obliged to write; his friends found it necessary to be ever on the search for suggestive subjects; and thus much that suited even the youthful mind appeared; and often in such a form as inclined them to make further acquaintance with his writings.

A deep sorrow came upon him during the progress of his Homer, in the death of his excellent friend Mr. Unwin, who died at Winchester of putrid fever, whilst travelling with Mr. Henry Thornton.

But a still greater loss, the greatest that could possibly have befallen him, was not far distant. In the year 1791, Mrs. Unwin, his ever-watchful protectress and most kind nurse, was attacked by a first paralytic seizure. The next year she had a second; and between that and the close of her life Cowper's malady returned in full force. He suffered constantly from a low fever; at times for days together he would take no nourishment, and when at last she passed to her rest, in 1796, he was so wrapped up in his own misery, that after one passionate expression of grief he turned away and mentioned her name no more.

Even during this last illness she had wonderfully retained her interest in him, and never ceased to care for him. Once, indeed, when not far from her end, she actually expressed a wish to try to walk, in order, by getting him to give her his arm, to rouse him from a position in which he had remained for days together.

The condition of both the poet and his exemplary friend would indeed in these last years have been melancholy in the extreme, had not God in His mercy raised up for them several new friends, and laid it on the hearts of some of the old ones to care for them.

Lady Hesketh was one of the chief of these. When in former years she had visited at the house, she had admired and wondered at Mrs. Unwin's peculiar adaptation for the task she had undertaken. And now in her distress she voluntarily came to her relief, and took charge of the little household.

Others, too, who had not known Cowper in early life, had recently sought him out, and henceforward proved invaluable and fast friends to him.

One of these was his own grand-nephew, Mr. Johnson, to whose house at Dereham both the invalids were removed before Mrs. Unwin's death; and another was Mr. Hayley, then enjoying some reputation as a poet, but now chiefly remembered as one of Cowper's biographers.

Amongst other kindnesses, all these friends continually occupied themselves in finding subjects for his pen; for, wonderful as it may seem, almost to the last, and when in the lowest depths of melancholy, if

he had but a fable to versify he seemed to experience relief; and whilst nothing else produced the least effect, he was soothed in some small degree when writing.

That most powerful and profoundly melancholy poem entitled "The Castaway" was his last original piece. It was founded on an anecdote which many years before he had read in "Anson's Voyage round the World," and as expressive of his own deplorable feelings some stanzas of it are here given.

"Obscurest night involved the sky,
The Atlantic billows roared,
When such a destined wretch as I,
Washed headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

"No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.
He loved them both, but both in vain;
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

"Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

* * *

"At length his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

"No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead.

"I therefore purpose not, nor dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

"No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he."

Too late to afford pleasure to any except his relatives and friends, for his malady was at that time very grievous, came the news of a pension of £300 per annum bestowed on this remarkable man by the Government. The veil that clouded his spirit never lifted again to the very last; but his bodily sufferings were not severe.

He died on the 25th of April, A.D. 1800, and in the moment of departing, as his nephew delighted to relate, his features assumed an appearance of calmness and composure, mingled, as it were, with holy surprise. "My most dear and intimate friend, William Cowper, has obtained a release from all his distresses," wrote Mr. Newton. "The last twelve hours of his life he lay still and took no notice, but so long as he could speak there was no proof that his derangement was either removed or abated. He was, however, free from his great terrors. There was no sign either of joy or sorrow when near his departure. What a glorious surprise must it be to find himself released from all his chains in a moment, and in the presence of the Lord whom he loved and whom he served!"

COWPER'S GRAVE.

I.

"It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying;
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying;
Yet let the grief and humbleness as low as silence languish:
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

II.

"O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while you were smiling!

"At length his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more:
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

"No poet wept him; but the page
Of narrative sincere,
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed,
Alike immortalize the dead.

"I therefore purpose not, nor dream,
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date:
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

"No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatched from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he."

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[illegible]nd died while you

III.

"And now, what time ye all may read, through dimming tears, his story,
How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,
And how, when, one by one, sweet sounds and wand'ring lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face, because so broken-hearted,

IV.

"He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration;
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly, as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

V.

"With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God, whose heaven hath won him,
Who suffered once the madness cloud to His own love to blind him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him;

VI.

"And wrought within his shattered brains such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars—harmonious influences:
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

VII.

"Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses:
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

VIII.

"And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while frenzy desolated,—
Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God created.

IX.

"Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses,
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses—
That turns his fevered eyes around—'My mother! where's my mother?'
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other!

X.

"The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale with watchful love—the unweary love she bore him!—
Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic eyes which closed in death to save him.

XI.

"Thus? oh, not *thus!* no type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those Eyes alone, and knew, "My Saviour! *not* deserted!"

E. BARRETT BROWNING.

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Had heard his voice in every blast,
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than fifty years of age when her son Richard was born, and ten years had elapsed since the birth of his brother.

Her anxiety to see this little boy walking in the way of life appears to have been great. She bought for him Janeway's "Token for Children," a well-known book in those days; and for a time it made such an impression on him as to cause him to have many a serious thought, and sometimes to go by himself and pray; so that there was some promise of early fruit,—a promise, however, which was unhappily blighted.

His father, perhaps, had some hand in this; for though a Churchman, and accustomed to take his son with him to church, we should gather from certain hints that he was not, at least at that time, a partaker of his wife's faith. And as the boy grew up he was rather remarkable for his rapid advance in wickedness; until at length, falling in with some infidel works, and loving darkness rather than light, he was not merely content himself to adopt the opinions contained in them, but he became quite earnest in his endeavours to instil his infidelity into others. In this he unfortunately succeeded so well, that when in after-years he anxiously sought to undo this his unhappy work, his efforts were in some instances at least in vain.

"He was suffered indeed to proceed to awful lengths in infidelity," said Mr. Pratt, who knew him well; yet he never was wholly sincere in his infidelity; for of his state at this time he afterwards wrote,

"When I was sunk in the depths of infidelity I was afraid to read any author who treated Christianity in a dispassionate, wise, and searching manner. He made me uneasy. Conscience would gather strength. . . . He would recal early instructions and impressions. . . . My father had a religious servant. I frequently cursed and reviled him. He would only smile on me as a deluded creature. I felt that he thought he had something which I knew not how to value, and that he was therefore my superior. I felt that there was real dignity in his conduct. It made me appear little even in my own eyes. If he would have condescended to argue with me I could have cut some figure, wretched as it would have been. He drew me once to hear Mr. Whitefield. I was seventeen or eighteen years old. It had no sort of religious effect on me, nor had the preaching of any man in my unconverted state. My religion began by contemplation. Yet I conceived a high reverence for Mr. Whitefield. I saw a commanding and irresistible effect, and he made me feel my own insignificance."

Throughout his life Richard Cecil met with many striking escapes from sudden or violent deaths; and some of these were in childhood. Once he fell through the ice, and when discovered and got out was at first supposed to be dead; at another time he was within an inch of being torn to pieces by a mill-wheel: but it was by no such startling interpositions that he was at last brought to a knowledge of himself and his Saviour.

His boyhood and early youth passed amidst abundant proofs that into whatever line of life he eventually entered he would therein become distinguished. Even then he wrote so well that some of his productions were published in the periodicals of the day; and his own father refused to believe that he was the author of a poem which he accidentally met with, until the youth retired with a given subject, and produced another about as good.

He was destined for business, and placed successively in two city houses; but so determined was his aversion to mercantile pursuits, and so evident his literary and artistic tastes, that his father finding him constantly at picture sales, or trying his own hand at painting, at length proposed that he should go to Rome and study there under the guidance of a friend of his own; and that plan would have been carried out but for some untoward circumstances.

So the youth remained at home, amusing himself as best he might with his books, his painting, and his music. For his genius was very versatile, and he loved all the arts. Disappointed, and we may be pretty sure in some measure soured by the failure of this Italian scheme, he devoured all the sceptical works that came in his way, and continued to harden his heart and to grieve his anxious mother, until one eventful night; when, as he lay in bed his thoughts turned on her, and he began to ponder over her trials, which he knew to be many, and to wonder at her patience in bearing them. Then from wonder he went on to reflect that it was really through her

private study of the Bible—the very book that he had learned to doubt—and by secret prayer, that she always appeared to gain her strength and her cheerfulness. And "all the while I," he said to himself, "I who give an unbounded loose to my appetites, and seek pleasure by every means, seldom or never find it." She, therefore, he concluded, had a secret source of comfort which he did not possess, and thus he was led on to the point of resolution, "Why not seek it myself?" And immediately he rose to pray.

But then followed this other thought,—"My mother believes in Christ, the very Christ whom I have ridiculed. How can I pray in His name?" He returned to his bed and threw himself down in utter confusion, murmuring, "This Christ stands in my way." However, the next day he began by praying to the "Supreme Being," and then he consulted religious books, and went to hear preaching, by which means his objections were gradually answered, his difficulties removed, and finally his mother's heart was gladdened by his now ready attention to her loving admonitions. In short, his whole life had a new bent; and steadily, though only by degrees, it was entirely changed and amended. Old things had passed away; all things henceforth became new.

But if his mother rejoiced, his father was not pleased. "I know not what to do with you," he said. "I have made two experiments for your subsistence: I have offered to bring you into my business, which at my death will be as good as an estate to you: you

have rejected all my proposals; and you now seem to be taking a religious turn. But I tell you plainly, that if you connect yourself with Dissenters and sectarians, I will do nothing for you, living or dying; but if you choose to go regularly into the Church, I will not only bear the expense of a university, for which you have had some education, but I will buy you a living on your entry into orders." So young Richard promised to consider what his father had said, and the result was that on May 19th, 1773, he began his university course at Queen's College, Oxford, and in due time became, not only a minister of the gospel, but a minister of the Church of England. As in the case of John Newton, it seemed in human language just a little additional weight in one scale which turned the balance between his being a minister in the Established Church or amongst Nonconformists; but those who remember the directing Hand which is ever at work, may well see here another token for good with regard to England's Church.

Of his college course few particulars are left on record; but that this period was marked both by mental struggles and the outward trials of opposition and coldness, we learn from such sources of information as remain.

Yet he left behind him there no doubtful character; and his piety and worth becoming known to the Rev. Mr. Pugh, of Rauceby, in Lincolnshire, he was invited by him to become his curate, and thus began his ministerial course in connection with the very man at

whose house the first suggestion touching missions among the heathen in connection with the Church of England was made. He was ordained in 1776.

It is clear, too, that Mr. Pugh speedily discerned the value of his curate, from the fact that in a short time he induced him to go and take charge of the three churches of Thornton, Bagworth, and Markfield, until such time as Mr. Abbott, the son of the deceased vicar, to whom these livings belonged, should be able to take possession.

It soon proved that Richard Cecil was sent thither to do a very good work. He found little religion in any of these churches; but when he left there was a flourishing congregation in all of them, with many true Christians amongst them; and, what was more, through the divine blessing on his efforts, both young Mr. Abbott himself and a sister of his embraced the truth in the love of it; and a faithful pastor was thus left to care for those who would otherwise have been left as sheep without a shepherd.

Set free at length from these three churches, he soon found himself the possessor of two little livings in Lewes, procured for him by a friend, and worth together about £80 per annum. For his own personal comfort's sake we may say that it would have been well if he had never been presented to them; for at Lewes he got into a damp house, and was soon attacked so badly with rheumatism in the head that in a short time he was obliged to resign; though he held them as long as he could with the help of a curate, in order to secure a good successor, and some-

times went backwards and forwards from Islington to Lewes to preach. On one of these occasions he had one of those remarkable escapes with which his life was so peculiarly chequered.

Arriving at East Grinstead Common rather late in the evening he met a man who appeared to be so thoroughly intoxicated as to be in danger of falling from his horse, and having called in vain to warn him, he rode up to him in order to stop his fall, when immediately he found his bridle seized, and heard loud threats used in case of resistance. He endeavoured to break away, but as he was doing so three other men on horseback came up and surrounded him. "Here is an occasion for faith," thought he; and the words, "Call upon Me in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee," came into his mind.

The leader soon demanded "who he was, and where he was going." "Nothing needs a lie," thought Mr. Cecil; and so he boldly answered the highwayman's question. "Sir, I know you," he replied, "and have heard you preach at Lewes. Let the gentleman's horse go: we wish you good night."

So, with sixteen pounds (Queen Anne's bounty) in his pocket, the young clergyman escaped.

During this stay in Lewes he lost both his parents; but on his father's death it was found that the business, which his elder brother entered on, was all that he had to leave, and Richard Cecil was, therefore, without private means throughout his life, and for the most part in somewhat straitened circumstances.

It was, as I have said, in 1780 that Mr. Cecil entered on his work at St. John's, which was then in a low state, much search having been hitherto fruitlessly made to obtain a minister.

This proprietary chapel had been built in the reign of Queen Anne, and it was intended to be truly a *chapel of ease* from the ministry of Dr. Sacheverell, that noisy, political High Churchman who, in despair of promotion by the Whigs, had gone over to the Tories, and who had raised the whole country by his seditious preaching, and his cry of "The Church in danger!" He had been impeached, sentenced to have his books burnt, and to be himself silent for three years; but Queen Anne, who in heart had always favoured him, gave him the valuable living of St. Andrew's, Holborn, at the expiration of his sentence; and by so doing no doubt she threw many a good parishioner into despair, until this plan was thought of. It was thus that this well-known evangelical church had its origin.

Little is known of its early history, or of its ministers before the time when Mr. Cecil went there. The building was then completely out of repair, and altogether so neglected, that Sir Eardley Wilmot, the chief manager of the Rugby estate on which it stood, having advertised in vain for a clergyman willing to take it, declared that he would procure an Act of Parliament to get it made into a parish church. He had also said, however, that he would only have a clergyman recommended by the archbishop; and so the matter stood when some one

asked his Grace to put Mr. Cecil's name before Sir Eardley. The Archbishop did so, and thus it came about that he whose name became durably connected with the chapel was invited to St. John's. He accordingly went to look at it, and at once doubted whether, having no private means of his own, he could possibly undertake it, on account of the large sum that was required for necessary repairs. He would, in fact, have declined the proposal, had not two friends come forward with promises of support—Mr. Cardale, of Bedford Row, and Mrs. Wilberforce, aunt to the well-known member for Yorkshire, who lived in John Street after her widowhood.

So the thing was settled; but it should be stated here, that at that time, and for many succeeding years, Mr. Cecil also held three lectureships—one in Spitalfields; one in Long Acre, taken alternately for three years at a time with Mr. Foster; and another at Orange Street Chapel, which then belonged to the Church of England.

This latter produced him £80 per annum; but the one in Spitalfields was rather an expense than otherwise, because he had very frequently to hire a conveyance in order to go the distance. He never was a strong man, and as he seems to have had a rheumatic tendency, he could not endure so much bodily fatigue as some others. For many years he suffered greatly from a complaint supposed to be sciatica, and at one time—that is, about 1798—his condition was thought to be dangerous.

A consultation was held respecting him, and the

result was that he was prohibited from preaching while the symptoms lasted.

But he had been announced to preach in the morning to the children, and in the evening to their parents; and this engagement he determined to keep notwithstanding this prohibition. Accordingly he made the attempt, telling his congregation that he did so contrary to the orders of his physicians, and that he would not be able to meet them in the evening. He had not spoken more than five minutes on the words, "Surely I come quickly," when it became evident to his hearers that he was in extreme pain, and after persevering for about twenty minutes, he was obliged to conclude with the last words of the Bible as a benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen." Many who heard him that day believed that they would never listen to his voice again; but he did in a great measure recover, and lived twelve years after that attack.

But this is anticipating. We return now to the opening of his ministry at St. John's. He had, in truth, entered on very difficult work. Mrs. Wilberforce and a few of those who attended the chapel were people who looked to hear from his lips the fullest gospel teaching, and to listen to just the same strains of doctrine and exhortation as those which they had heard from him in other places.

But Mr. Cecil soon discovered that the majority of the people naturally coming under his influence were of a very different stamp, and for the most part entirely opposed to the spirit of the gospel. He had

therefore at the outset to consider on what plan he should work; for it was clear that two courses were open to him. Either he might at once fully and boldly show his colours, and preach as he had done in his country spheres and in his London lectures; or he might work more cautiously; deliver at first only a measure of truth, and so gradually lead his people on.

By taking the former course he knew that he would at once drive away the regular attendants, but that he could instead draw around him most of the religious people of the neighbourhood, as well as many from a distance, gather a large congregation of attached hearers, and thus speedily secure to himself a good income. But there was no such prospect if he took the other course.

This, nevertheless, was the one which he chose; and the consequence was that for some time his church was thinly attended; while the expenses of putting it into good repair and of making it thoroughly comfortable entirely consumed all the small revenue from pew-rents. But it will be best to give his own account of the matter.

"When I married," he said, "I lived in a small house at Islington, situated in the midst of a garden, for which I paid £14 a year. My annual income was only £80, and with this I had to support myself, my wife, and a servant. I was then, indeed, minister of St. John's, but I received nothing from that place for several of the earlier years. When I went thither, I considered that I was sent to the people of

that place and neighbourhood. I thought it my duty therefore to adopt a system and a style of preaching which should have a tendency to meet their case. All which they had heard before was dry, frigid, and lifeless. A high, haughty, stalking spirit characterized the place. I was thrown amongst men of the world, men of business, men of reading, and men of thought. I began, therefore, with principles. I preached on the divine authority of the sacred Scriptures; I dissected Saurin's sermons, I took the sinews and substance of some of our most masterly writers, I preached on such texts as 'If ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye believe though one rose from the dead.' I set myself to explain terms and phrases. My chief object was underground work. But what was the consequence of this? An outcry was raised against me throughout the religious world. It was said that at other places I continued to preach the truth, but that at St. John's I was sacrificing it to my hearers. Even my brethren, instead of entering into my reasons and plans, lay on their oars. My protectress turned her back on me. I hesitated at first to enter on so great a risk, but with grandeur of spirit she told me she would put her fortune on the issue; if any benefit resulted from it, it should be mine, and she would bear me harmless of all loss. She heard me a few times, and then wholly withdrew herself, and even took away her servants. Some of them would now and then steal in, but as they reported that 'they got no food,' the report did but strengthen the prejudices of their mistress. She

could not enter into my motives. I was obliged to regard her conduct as Huss did that of the man who was heaping faggots around him, '*O sancte simplicitas*'! She could not calculate consequences, and was unmoved even when I placed my conduct in its strongest light,—Can you attribute any but the purest motives to me? Ought not the very circumstances to which I voluntarily subject myself, by adhering to the plan you condemn, gain me some credit for my intentions? Had I preached here in the manner I preached elsewhere you know that the place would have been crowded by the religious world. I should then have obtained from it an income of £200 or £300 a year; whereas now I sit down with little or no advantage arising from it, though I have a family rising up about me. God sent me hither to preach to this people, and to raise a congregation in this place; and I am proceeding in that system and way which seems to me best adapted, under God, to meet the state of this people.' "

So he explained his course of action, but he added, "I laboured under this desertion of my friends for a long time. It was about seven years before affairs began to wear such an aspect, that my protectress and others allowed that matters had certainly turned out as they could not have foreseen. Several witnesses rose up, of undoubted and authentic character, to testify to the power of the grace of God. . . . . One friend, indeed, stood by me. He saw my plan, and entered into it, and said such strong things on the subject as greatly confirmed my own mind.

'The *Church* of Christ,' said he, 'must sometimes be sacrificed for Christ.'"

But whatever may have been, or may be, the opinions of those qualified to judge as to the right or wrong of this manner of proceeding, one thing is certain, that Mr. Cecil had all the powers and the learning necessary to accomplish his object, so far as it lay in any man to do so. "His learning," wrote Mr. Pratt in the account which he drew up of him after his decease, "his learning consisted more in the knowledge of other men's ideas than in an accurate acquaintance with the niceties of the languages. Yet he was better acquainted with these than many who devote a disproportionate time to this acquisition. His incessant application, chiefly by candle-light, when at Oxford, to the study of Greek, of which he was enthusiastically fond, brought on an almost total loss of sight for six months. He had determined to become a perfect master of the niceties of that refined and noble language.

"So solid and extensive was Mr. Cecil's real learning, that there were no important points in morals or religion on which he had not read the best authors, and made up his mind on the most mature deliberation; nor could any topic be started in history or philosophy, on subjects of art or of science, with which he was not found more generally acquainted than other men. But while he could lay these parts of learning under contribution to aid him in his one object of impressing truth on man, he was a master

in the learning which is more peculiarly appropriate to his profession. He was so much in the habit of the daily reading of the Scriptures in the originals, that, as he told me, he went to this employ naturally and insensibly."

But learning, let it be of what kind it will, generally proves of comparatively small use to a preacher unless he has power in delivery. A good manner, as well as good matter, is required in order that a man should be an effective preacher; and this Mr. Cecil had in a remarkable degree. In fact, he possessed an extraordinary power of gaining and of retaining the attention of his congregation. Moreover, both in style and in delivery he knew how to adapt himself to the feelings and tastes of the people whom he saw before him, and would sometimes use very unusual and startling methods in order to force those to attend who were not accustomed to listen to sermons.

Thus on one occasion he was preaching a charity sermon one Sunday afternoon to a large congregation, chiefly composed of the lower orders, who had probably just got up from their dinners; for they appeared heavy and sleepy. Some lounged, some turned their backs on him, until he almost felt it useless to go on. But he would not be disheartened. "I must have attention," I said to myself; "I *will* be heard. The case was desperate, and in despair I sought a desperate remedy. I exclaimed aloud, 'Last Monday morning a man was hanged at Tyburn!' Instantly the face of things was changed. All was silence

and expectation. I caught their ear, and retained it throughout the sermon."

This power of adaptation in him was something quite extraordinary. At one time he used to preach four sermons in the day to entirely different congregations; yet to each set of people he gave quite a different sermon.

But he was very careful never to weary. "You have a certain quantity of attention to work on," he would say to his younger brethren; "make the best use of it while it lasts. The iron will cool; and then nothing, or worse than nothing, is done. If a preacher will leave unsaid all vain repetitions, and watch against undue length in his entrance and width in his discussion, he may limit a written sermon to half an hour, and one from notes to forty minutes; and this time he should not allow himself to exceed except on special occasions."

He had himself a very great facility in introducing telling illustrations, and of introducing them in the most effective manner; yet everything was done naturally and with ease.

"He had seen," continues Mr. Pratt, "so much of the evil of spending the preacher's time in doctrinal statements, that possibly there was some deficiency in this respect in his own practice. . . . . He wrote and spoke to mankind; he dealt with the business and bosoms of men. An energy of truth prevailed in his ministry, which roused the conscience; and a benevolence reigned in his spirit, which seized the heart; yet I much question whether the prevailing effect of

his preaching was not determination grounded on conviction and admiration, rather than on emotion. When in perfect health and spirits, and master of his subject, his eloquence was finished and striking; but though there was often a tenderness which awakened corresponding feelings in the hearers, yet his eloquence wanted that vehement passion which carries away the minds of others—not much of the impassioned entered into the composition of his nature. He was at the same time pre-eminent in genius and in judgment," yet no man had a more single eye in his preaching. "His mind grasped every subject firmly; his apprehensions of religion were grand and elevated; and he led his auditors to condemn and trample down in comparison with it all the petty objects of this lower world."

Mr. Cecil had an animated countenance, with great variety of expression, and a graceful and forcible manner; and at the same time there was an authority in that which to strangers sometimes appeared dogmatic. In every way, indeed, his manner was like that of no other man. Sometimes, when he wanted to address a certain sort of character, he would put down the initial letter of some representative type of it, and then call up the man and draw a most vivid picture. In fact, Mr. Cecil was a great student of character; and herein lay much of his power. To close these notes, quoted from the testimony of his friends, Mr. Pratt and Mr. Wilson, it should here be added that he was a very attached member of the Church of England, and would never break through her order and discipline for any temporary ends.

It is needless to enlarge on the influence of such a man at such a period, or of the value of his counsels in the formation of the earliest of the great societies; but it must strike readers of the present day as exceedingly strange, that with all his London work he should have accepted the two small country livings of Chobham and Bisley.

It was in the year 1800 that they were offered to him by Mr. Samuel Thornton, son of Mr. John Thornton, of Clapham; but his answer was a positive refusal, and that repeated several times, in reply to pressing requests that he would take them, and serve them himself personally only in summer. But Mr. Thornton strongly urged this matter, representing the claims of his family and the danger of his not being able to go on at St. John's; and at length, thinking that possibly here was a call of Providence, Mr. Cecil yielded.

This was two years after the serious attack which had threatened to terminate his life in 1798.

His health was much broken even at that time; but yet when he went down into the country it was to work and not to rest. First conciliating the good-will of the farmers, by leaving three of their number to settle everything respecting the payment of the tithes, he immediately, and with great zeal, set himself to meet the spiritual necessities of those then most ignorant and most immoral villages.

"If by taking one guinea more I should excite prejudices in a single mind against my message, I should defeat my great project in coming here," he

said. And he soon found that his new sphere needed attention very sorely.

The people for the most part were sunk in ignorance and immorality. Most of them regarded Sunday as a holiday, and spent it in sports and amusements; whilst those who went to church behaved in the most disgraceful manner. "When I first went to Chobham," he wrote to some one, "as I was sitting in the vestry, on hearing the noise and uproar of the boys, and the people in the gallery talking to each other, I burst into tears, and felt with the prophet when he said, 'Can these dry bones live?'"

There was no house in the place in which he could live, but a kind London friend bought land and built one for him. He at once adapted his style to the capacities of the people; and soon such blessing attended his efforts, that he had large and attentive congregations.

It is matter of great regret that of such a preacher not many written sermons or compositions of any kind remain. A few of his sermons were published, and they have been regarded as perfect models. He also at various times wrote a good deal, and had at one time by him many MSS. intended for the press, but when his health failed he enjoined his wife to burn all after his death; and she, finding that nothing less than a promise would pacify his agitated mind, was obliged reluctantly to give it, making one exception, to which he agreed. Thus the church lost what might have been a valuable legacy.

His "Visit to the House of Mourning" was much

valued in its day; but after all we are chiefly indebted to the notes or recollections of friends for what we know of Richard Cecil; beyond the fact that he made St. John's what it so long remained, a great evangelical centre, and a centre also for much church work.

To Mr. Pratt, who for a short time had been his curate, we owe his well-known "Remains," of which he gives the following account:—"I was so struck," said he, "with the wisdom and originality of his remarks, that I considered it my duty to record what seemed to me most likely to be useful to others."

The remarks thus treasured up were, it should be remembered, such as fell from Mr. Cecil in quiet conversation, and were frequently elicited by some question put either by Mr. Pratt himself or by some other seekers after wisdom. The following are specimens:—

"The Christian's fellowship with God is rather a habit than a rapture. He is a pilgrim who has the habit of looking forward to the light before him; he has the habit of not looking back; he has the habit of walking steadily in the way, whatever be the weather, and whatever the road. These are his habits; and the Lord of the way is his guide, protector, friend, and felicity."

"True grace is a growing principle. The Christian grows in discernment: a child may play with a serpent; but the man gets as far from it as he can: a child may taste poison; but the man will not suffer a speck of poison near him. He grows in humility:

the blade shoots up boldly, and the young ear keeps erect with confidence; but the full corn in the ear inclines itself toward the earth, not because it is feebler, but because it is matured. He grows in strength: the new wine ferments and frets; but the old wine acquires a body and a firmness."

"Defilement is inseparable from the world. A man can nowhere rest his foot on it without sinking. A strong principle of assimilation combines the world and the heart together. There are especially certain occasions when the current hurries a man away; and he has lost the religious government of himself. When the pilot finds, on making the port of Messina, that the ship will not obey the helm, he knows that she is got within the influence of that attraction which will bury her in the whirlpool. We are to avoid the danger rather than to oppose it. This is a great doctrine of Scripture. An active force against the world is not so much inculcated as a retreating, declining spirit. *Keep thyself unspotted from the world!*"

"I could write down twenty cases wherein I wished God had done otherwise than He did, but which I now see, had I had my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. The life of a Christian is a life of paradoxes. He must lay hold on God; he must follow hard after Him; he must determine not to let Him go. And yet he must learn to let God alone. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces—to sit where He places us; to be what He would have us be; and this as long as He

pleases. . . . It may seem a harsh, but it is a wise dispensation toward a man, when the instant he stretches out his hand to order his affairs, God forces him to withdraw it."

"One of the most important considerations in making a sermon is to disembarrass it as much as possible. The sermons of the last century were like their large unwieldy chairs. Men have now a far more true idea of a chair, they consider it as a piece of furniture to sit upon; and they cut away from it everything that embarrasses and encumbers it. It requires as much reflection and wisdom to know what is not to be put into a sermon as what is."

"Christianity is so great and surprising in its nature, that, in preaching to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation. It is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions. It is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate man to passionate zeal for some religious party. But to bring a man to love God—to love the law of God, while it condemns him—to loathe himself before God—to tread the earth under his feet—to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ with man, this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach, that by me as His instrument He may effect these great ends; and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry, perhaps, with a man

because he will not let me convert him; in spite of all I can say, he will still love the world."

"The Church has endured a pagan and a papal persecution. There remains for her an infidel persecution—general, bitter, purifying, and cementing."

"Popery was the masterpiece of Satan. I believe him utterly incapable of such another contrivance. It was a systematic and infallible plan for forming manacles and mufflers for the human mind. It was a well-laid design to render Christianity contemptible, by the abuse of its principles and its institutions. It was formed to overwhelm, to enchant, to sit, as the great whore, making the earth drunk with her fornications.

"The infidel conspiracy approaches nearest to popery. But infidelity is a suicide. It dies by its own malignity."

"I am not inclined to view things in a gloomy aspect. Christianity must undergo a renovation. If God has sent His Son, and has declared that He will exalt Him on His throne, the earth and all that inherit it are contemptible in the view of such a plan! If this be God's design, proceed it does, and proceed it will. Christianity is such a holy and spiritual affair, that perhaps all human institutions are to be destroyed to make way for it. Men may fashion things as they will; but if there be no effusion of the Spirit of God on their institutions, they will remain barren and lifeless. Many Christians appear to have forgotten this."

One important matter with which Mr. Cecil was

connected was the formation of the Eclectic Society, of which he was one of the originators.

Clerical meetings were doubtless by no means as common then as they are now; and yet the want of such opportunities for consultation and intercourse was beginning to be felt.

In the present time those of the clergy who are of one mind find numerous engagements which call them together, in the many committees and meetings connected with our various societies; but few of these things were then in operation; while yet the tie which bound evangelical men together was a very strong one, and such as led them to yearn after brotherly intercourse. And with a view of promoting this, the Eclectic Society was instituted in the year 1783; and the first meeting was held at a house which really deserved to be noted on account of the frequency with which it was used in such matters during those early years of combination in work—namely, the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldersgate Street—four persons being present.

These four were the Rev. J. Newton, the Rev. H. Foster, the Rev. Richard Cecil, and Eli Bates, Esq.; for, though intended as a clerical society in the main, it was not to be an absolutely close one. According to the rules laid down, two or three dissenting ministers and two or three laymen were also to be members.

After the first meeting, however, the vestry of St. John's Chapel was the place of assembly, and the members, who soon amounted to twelve or fourteen, with as many country members or visitors, met regu-

larly there once a fortnight and discussed all sorts of religious questions. And in the notes of these meetings, edited and published after most of the first members were dead, by Archdeacon Pratt, there occur the following remarks about Mr. Cecil:—

"There is no doubt," says the writer, "that amongst a group of these good men," whose characters he had just noticed, "Mr. Cecil stood pre-eminent, as a preacher capable of commanding the attention of a congregation, and producing upon them a corresponding effect. . . . He had the power of exciting and preserving attention above most men. All his effort in the pulpit was directed, first to engage attention, and then repay it. His most striking sermons were generally those which he preached from very short texts, such as 'My soul hangeth on Thee,' 'All my fresh springs are in Thee,' 'O Lord, teach me Thy way,' 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.' In these sermons, the whole subject had probably struck him at once; and what comes in this way is generally found to be more natural and forcible than what the mind is obliged to excogitate by its own laborious efforts."

In his own words we have his method of preparation for preaching. "I generally look into the portions of Scripture appointed by the Church to be read in the services of the day. I watch, too, for any new light which may be thrown on passages in the course of reading, conversation, or prayer. I seize the occasions furnished by my own experience —my state of mind—my family occurrences. Sub-

jects taken up in this manner are always likely to meet the cases and wants of some persons in the congregation. Sometimes I have no text prepared; and I have found this to arise generally from sloth. I go to work, this is the secret; make it a business—something will arise when least expected. It is a favourite method with me to reduce the text to some point of doctrine. On this topic I enlarge, and then apply it. I like to ask myself, 'What are you doing? What is your aim?' To be effective we must draw more from nature, and less from the works of men. We must study the Book of Providence, the Book of Nature, the heart of man, and the Book of God; we must read the history of the world,—we must deal with matters of fact before our eyes."

Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, in the course of a funeral sermon which he preached for his friend, made these remarks:—"When his subjects were of the grander order, and his powers were on their full stretch, there was a comprehension of mind, a native dignity, a sublimity of conception, a richness and fertility of imagery, which captivated and astonished his audience. No one can form an adequate notion of his powers as a public speaker from his printed sermons. Like every true orator, the soul of his discourses lay in a large degree in that pathos, that touch of nature, that surprising originality, that sublimity and grandeur of expression, which must considerably evaporate with the affections which produced them. I have, on the

whole, no fear of affirming before this audience, who best knew his excellences, that he was not merely one of the most eminent preachers of his day, but one of a totally different order from others—a completely original preacher."

"But," continues Archdeacon Pratt, in his notes, "amidst all his great gifts and commanding powers, his grand and absorbing topic was never lost sight of." "Christ is God's great ordinance;" he often said; "nothing ever has been done, or will be done to purpose, but so far as He is held forth with simplicity. All lines must centre in Him. I feel this in my own experience, and therefore I govern my ministry by it."

"His delicate health," says a very recent writer,* "prevented him from taking so busy a part as his friends did in the evangelical movement. But in a different way he contributed in no slight degree to its success. . . . His 'Remains' show traces of a scholarly mind, a sense of humour, a grasp of leading principles, a liberality of thought, and capacity of appreciating good wherever it might be found, which render them, short though they are, a valuable contribution to evangelical literature."

During Mr. Cecil's illness in 1798 those friends who were privileged to visit him were careful to note and treasure up the rich vein of reflections which from time to time fell from his lips. "If God should restore me to health again," he remarked one day,

* Abbey and Overton's "English Church in the Eighteenth Century."

"I am resolved to study nothing but my Bible. Literature is inimical to spirituality, if it be not kept under with a firm hand. A man ought to call in from every quarter whatever may assist him to understand, explain, and illustrate the Bible; but there—in its light and life—is all that is good for man. All important truth is there; and I feel that no comfort enters sick curtains from any other quarter. My state is an admonition to young men. I have been too much occupied in preparing to live, and too little in living. I have read too much from curiosity, and for mental gratification. I was literary when I should have been active. We trifle too much. Let us do something for God. The man of God is a man of feeling and activity. I feel, and would urge with all possible strength on others, that Jesus Christ is our all in all." At another time he said to a friend, "It has been a night of great pain; but it was a night appointed me by Jesus Christ; and surely it must be a good one that He appoints! Had I laid down my life for you, your good nights would have been my anxious care." And again, "I have great peace—not a ruffled breeze night or day—and this is all grounded on Jesus Christ. Give up that, and I should have no sleep to-night. All is pitch-dark without it; dark as a Socinian, dark as a moralist. There is no light but what Christ brings." At length the violence of this attack was so far abated that he was able to resume his ministry; but he never really recovered, and henceforward he was forced to make use of a seat in the pulpit. "That I

am able to meet the frequent returns of my public duty is almost miraculous," he once remarked. "Not one of my hearers has any idea of the quantity of pain I suffer in the course of four and twenty hours; and yet, if it were ever upon me at the moment I was called to preach, it would be utterly impossible for me to begin." Nothing but his enthusiasm and zeal in his work enabled him to go on so long as he did. At length in 1807 he was struck down by that terrible disease which has wrecked many a fine mind before it killed the man. He had a first paralytic seizure that year, but so far recovered that he was able to resume his work. Next year he had a second, which deprived him of the use of his right side, and two years later an apoplectic attack terminated his life on August 15, 1810.

During these last illnesses no treasures of wisdom could be expected to fall from him. It was much to say that his faith did not fail, but remained as firm as ever, while everything else was shaken; and in deep submission to his heavenly Father's will he passed through the valley of humiliation.

None the less great, however, was the trial.

"I find it easy to tell people from the pulpit how to act in such cases, particularly Christians; but things are stronger than we are, and I find it very difficult to act myself," said he when laid aside on the first occasion.

Those last years of trial had one alleviation, however, in that they served to draw out the sympathetic help of his people. One lent him a house at

Clifton for six months; and another, finding him oppressed by the heat and noise of London, removed him from his house in Little James Street and placed him at Tunbridge Wells. Another, when the lease of St. John's was disposed of, provided him with an income for life. Nothing in short was left undone that could be done, to afford a hope of prolonging so valuable a life, or that could tend to mitigate his own and his family's sufferings; for, wherever he went, God had given him spiritual children who delighted to minister to the temporal necessities of their father and friend in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER VI.

THOMAS SCOTT.

1747—1821.

"He was a noble specimen of a Christian, and deserved a much wider recognition than he ever received in this world."—"*The English Church in the Eighteenth Century.*" *By the Rev. C. J. Abbey and the Rev. J. H. Overton.* 1878.

WE have not yet done with Olney.

It is a very singular thing that this dull little country town should have been honoured to be the residence, for some years each, of no fewer than three of our country's Christian leaders during the reign of George III.; but so it was.

Already have we seen John Newton, the once profligate and degraded young sailor, located there as a Christian pastor of no common earnestness, and there all unconsciously acquiring a fitness to become not only the highly-esteemed London rector, but a great centre of Christian influence in the metropolis: already, too, have we seen him followed by William Cowper, the sometime frivolous yet well-bred youth, who at Olney grew into the Christian poet, and by his writings became one of the most powerful teachers

of the English people; and now we have to do with Thomas Scott, a man with a totally different but no less remarkable history; and one who in his time certainly did a work as great as that of either of the former.

Living epistles were these three men, epistles known and read of all who saw them; for personally each one gave striking evidence of the existence of a power to change and recreate of which the world knows nothing, yet which in such cases it cannot deny. And even to-day the name of Thomas Scott the commentator is one pronounced with honour and reverence; and that not only as a writer, but as the founder of a family, now in the fourth and fifth generations, which has branched out in various directions, and which is noted for its worth, its perseverance, and its strength of will.

Yet when we go back to the youth of this honoured man we find no kind of promise of such a career, but quite the contrary. There was energy in him, and perseverance, it is true, for he inherited these qualities from his father; but then there was with them every prospect of their being either turned to very bad account, or altogether lost for want of use, as appears on almost the first page of his history.

Thomas Scott was born sixteen years after Cowper, in 1747, in a small farmhouse at Braytoft, in Lincolnshire. His father was a grazier, and one who in the course of his life-time by persevering energy forced his way some few steps up the ladder of society. He seems to have been a respectable man too; but if he

had any religion at all it was of a Socinian character. As for his mother, she also must have been a woman of some strength of mind, and estimable in her way; and from her he learnt to read and write.

Then, when old enough, the little boy attended a small school, where he would probably have concluded his education but for the death of his elder brother, who had been brought up as a medical man; because the father was exceedingly ambitious to have one son in that profession.

Instead, therefore, of being early set to farming work, Thomas was transferred to a larger school at Scorton, where he got on well with his Latin, but unhappily fell into thoroughly bad courses; for he was there under an old and somewhat lethargic master, whom he soon learnt to deceive; and for five whole years he never went home, and so was cut off from any home influence that might have been for good. During this period, he said, he used to look at large books and wonder how they could possibly have been written; and when set to write themes he felt as if he had no ideas. Yet this, nevertheless, was the boy who was destined one day to write a Commentary on the Bible in six large volumes, of which the people of England and America have demanded and bought many tens of thousands of copies; besides some other important books.

In consequence of misconduct he suffered some disgrace at school; and then being bound apprentice to a surgeon, who took no care of his morals, and did not trouble himself what companions he chose, the

youth so broke through all bounds of morality that he was dismissed, and sent home to meet from his family, who prided themselves on their own good conduct, almost more displeasure and mortification than he knew how to bear.

A dispute over his indentures ensued, in consequence of which all notion of the medical profession was at length abandoned; and then the youth was set to do farming work of the very lowest and most laborious kinds, and thus exposed to hardships for which his previous life had not prepared him. In short, he became the common drudge of the farm.

In this manner nine long years passed away, during which he had many and serious illnesses; so that at times his life was despaired of; though no one seemed to trace them to the natural causes of exposure and hardship. At such seasons he had his fits of repentance, or, as he termed them, his "paroxysms of religion," and his dreams of amendment too; which, however, always passed away with each illness, and he went back to his old ways and his old companions.

In this situation his mind fretted; for he had naturally a love for books; and he chafed at the hard rule which kept him from them even as a relaxation. His temper became soured, and he did nothing to conciliate his family, but behaved himself roughly,—nay even insolently to all about him.

And yet even in this bearish, degraded state he was, strangely enough, all the while indulging in dreams of a university education, and, stranger still, even in visions of obtaining holy orders!

What seemed a merely casual circumstance at length brought these dreams to a point. He found out that his father's will was made, and that he was not, after all, to inherit the farm on which he toiled; so that he had no prospect whatever of a future maintenance.

On making that discovery he determined, in great indignation, to break away at once; and to his father's surprise and extreme displeasure, the old Latin and Greek books were then boldly produced and openly studied; until one evening, after a wet day of incessant fatigue, he passionately flung off his shepherd's frock, and declared his resolution never to put it on again.

He was a grown man, he thought, and he would do as he liked. So he went to a clergyman with whom he had some acquaintance, and asked his assistance. The request was received with very natural surprise by one who had hitherto known him only as a shepherd; especially as a university education now appeared to be quite out of the question; yet the young man expressed his wish to obtain holy orders at once. But when he had tried him, and found that without much difficulty he could render some verses of the Greek Testament both into English and into Latin, this clergyman promised to mention him to the archdeacon, and to get his case represented to the bishop, in which he succeeded.

Now, it must be remembered that the state of matters in the Church was then far different to what it is at present; and, moreover, that neither the

bishop nor the archdeacon knew what we know of young Thomas Scott. It was not, therefore, at all surprising that he should at first have been suspected of *Methodism*, and have found some difficulty in clearing himself from that charge. He had for years past done what he could amidst all his drudgery to improve his mind; and he had to some extent exercised his thoughts and power of composition in correspondence with his sisters, and by contributing to local newspapers; so that he contrived to cut a better figure than might at first have been imagined. So the end of it all was that, though refused for that ordination, he was told that, if he could get his father's consent, he might present himself the next time; and after spending a little while in sight-seeing in London, he went home, put off the clerical attire somewhat prematurely assumed, and taking again the shepherd's frock, which in his passion he had renounced, he that afternoon sheared eleven large sheep.

But this was his last labour of the kind; for his failure becoming known among his neighbours, and a good deal of ridicule attending it, the spirit of his family was roused. His brother said, "I wish he had not made the attempt; but I cannot bear to have it said that one of our name undertook what he was unable to accomplish;" and so all the brothers and sisters met at the paternal home, and being supported by their mother, they succeeded in wringing the desired and written consent out of the father.

To get the still necessary signatures of two bene-

ficed clergymen, Thomas Scott had, however, to go beyond the range of those who knew him best; yet he succeeded in this too, returned to his studies, and when the time came, as the examiner happened to hit on the very points in theology which he had really studied, he passed,—the chaplain complimenting him with this remark, "I perceive that Christianity has got an able advocate in you."

So he was ordained. In his "Force of Truth" he afterwards remarked, "I deliberately judge the whole transaction to have been the most atrocious wickedness of my life. But I did not, at the time, in any degree regard it in this light; nor did I till long after feel any remorse of conscience for my *prevaricating*, if not directly *lying*, subscriptions and declarations."

In short, he was not in every sense utterly careless, nor utterly thoughtless, at this very time. He meant to study, and he meant to work. So far as he knew it, he meant to do his duty. God was indeed leading the blind even then by a way that he knew not; and on the very occasion of his ordination a sermon preached by one of the young men ordained, who had kept apart from the rest, forcibly attracted his attention. It was "on the office and duty of a minister;" and he believed it did him some good. For some time, in fact, he had not been easy in his mind; but unhappily soon after this he met with some Socinian writings, which again lulled his conscience to rest. It was in the year 1773 that Thomas Scott received his ordination as priest; and thus was

the grazier's drudge transformed into the curate of Stoke and Weston Underwood, on a salary of £50 per annum. Nothing but a proud conceit of his own abilities, with an idea of some day distinguishing himself, as he afterwards declared, had induced him to take the step; but he may certainly be cleared from all suspicion of having any pecuniary views in the matter. Such thoughts indeed never seem to have entered into his calculations. In fact, his prospects in that way would have deterred most men. His own family gave him no help in the matter. They were all accustomed to struggle, and perhaps thought that he could struggle as well as they. Yet had it not been that one little ewe lamb given him by his father some ten years before this epoch had in the course of that time produced a flock which he now sold to his father for £68, and thus was enabled to buy his books and pay his fees, it seems as if he never could have entered the ministry at all.

That done, nothing remained but to get to work; and with characteristic energy he began his studies, —taking up all kinds of subjects, Herodotus in the original, geography, chronology, Latin, the Septuagint, with a Socinian commentary, Hebrew, divinity,— in short, everything that would inform and equip his mind for his future work, and make up for past deficiencies. He had learnt to labour hard in another way, and not to stick at trifles; and no doubt the discipline had done something for him by teaching him what real work was. He worked now at what he loved, and threw his heart and soul into his studies;

but at the same time he did not forget that he had charge of a parish; and from the very beginning of his ministry he at least took pains with his sermons. Moreover, he began in one way as he went on through life, by being a practical preacher.

In those days he did not know much about doctrine; but he could see faults in morals, and he said to a friend, "Whether I shall be able to make any reformation I cannot tell, but I tell them their duty pretty plainly." To those who remember what he had been himself—how sour, how at least able to mix with low company, and to enjoy low-lived sports,—this may sound very like one black sheep finding fault with his fellows for the colour of their wool: but the fact seems to have been, that with his departure from home, and all that home's fretting influences, he had with a hearty resolve turned his back on all that he knew to be wrong, and to have become a really reformed character: henceforth he meant to be right and to do right, and according to his light he set to work in good earnest.

So far as Stoke was concerned, he had not much encouragement; for its people were ignorant and irreligious, without any school or other means of instruction except at church, to which but few ever went. But Weston Underwood was in a somewhat better state; there he got good congregations, and there were at least many professors of religion of one sort or another.

Considering their former harshness towards him, it is somewhat surprising to find that his attach-

ment to his own family evidently continued strong through life. Not a disrespectful word relating to his father, in fact, ever occurs in the confidential letters to his brother-in-law or other relatives which remain to us. "In my actions to my father I never offended; in my words I have too often," he wrote in May, 1772; and referring to his mother he said, "Surely nothing can afford more satisfaction to the considerate breast than to comfort the heart of an aged parent." Of both, "May all the blessings we have each received from them (perhaps not the most inconsiderable when the most unpalatable) be tenfold repaid them here or hereafter by the God of mercies." But he was a man of deep feeling, and one who required sympathy and affection, and these God now provided for him in an excellent wife.

He married, soon after entering on his curacy, a woman with neither money nor position, but one whose father had been unfortunate, and who was at that time housekeeper in the family of his friend and patron Mr. Wright, though regarded by Mrs. Wright as a friend. He met her first at a game of cards, and was struck by the good humour with which she lost her money. This sweetness of temper distinguished Mrs. Scott through life. She appears with it to have possessed very good sense, and many excellent qualities. In her he found everything that his best friends could have desired for him, and without her it is pretty plain that he would, humanly speaking, never have been the man that he soon became.

He afterwards thus wrote of this period of his life:

"Neither my wife nor myself had been much in the way of religious people. . . . Neither of us understood the grand outlines of the gospel. Yet we were both impressed with a strong sense of the truth of the Christian religion in a general view of it; but her impressions were the deeper; and she had far less from false principles and evil habits to counteract them."

It is worthy of remark that from the time of his marriage Mr. Scott began family prayer, and gradually improved in his manner of conducting this, as with everything else, until his family worship became a service in which he himself found deep enjoyment, and which was blessed to many who came under his roof.

It was in the same year, 1774, that he was first brought under a conviction of his sinfulness, especially as regarded his manner of entering the ministry, and it came about through a perusal of Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times. The next year may be said to have commenced the period of his enlightenment, and that was produced in the following way. His attention was casually drawn to the Eighth Article, with its recognition of the Athanasian Creed, and consequently of the doctrine of the Trinity therein contained. "These thirty-nine Articles I once signed," thought he; and again he felt self-condemned, and resolved to sign no more; and so, of course, to renounce all prospect of advancement.

A great deal of ridicule and a great deal of vexation followed when his decision was known; but he

was immoveable, and told his sister that he rested on the promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Mr. Newton, whose parish was close to Weston, heard of his conduct; and he declared his belief that such a man would surely soon be led into all truth; for though doctrinally wrong, and that fundamentally, Thomas Scott was now morally right. He was trying to do the will of God, so far as he knew it; and to such, the promise is sure.

Mr. Newton and he were not at this time personally well known to each other, though they had met at a visitation; and subsequently Mr. Scott had tried, though without success, to draw his neighbour into a controversy. "God was leading," thought Mr. Newton; and he would not risk the marring of His work.

Probably he was quite right.

But Mr. Scott was no confirmed Unitarian; and his attention now being drawn to the subject, he became so uneasy, that for hours every day he would study his Greek Testament with earnest prayer for Divine teaching. Very manifestly indeed his heavenly Father had then taken him into His own school; for he was placed under discipline as well as under instruction. Trials of various kinds came upon him. He had many sicknesses and domestic losses; and as these succeeded one another, so deeper and deeper still did his meditations become, until at no distant period he came out into the light, and anchored safely on the Rock of Ages.

That this was the case is first made visible in the letters which he wrote on the occasion of his father's death; in which he expressed bitter grief that to the last that parent resolutely adhered to the cold, comfortless creed of the Unitarians.

In the midst of these troubles he had had occasion to call on Mr. Newton, whom he had not seen since the termination of the correspondence in 1775, and was "so much comforted and edified by his discourse" that he felt himself "drawn towards him, and was inwardly pleased to have him for a friend." He got about £170 on his father's death; but through the expenses of frequent sicknesses, and one long and dangerous one, this little sum was gradually absorbed; and he found it impossible to keep out of debt. In fact, the pressure of such anxieties was at times almost crushing to him. But if his own faith failed sometimes, which it seldom did,—his wife's but rarely gave way; and she thus proved to him a great support and comforter.

In the year 1776 he had begun cautiously, and under a measure of guidance from Dr. Kerr, of Northampton, to apply the little knowledge of medicine which he possessed to the assistance of the poor in his parish, who often suffered grievously for want of medical advice; and by this continual activity he was helped, no doubt, to cast off his own troubles.

It was about the end of that year that he first began pretty frequently to hear Mr. Newton preach; and through him he was established in the truth of the gospel. His father's death happened in 1777, and it

was soon followed by that of his mother, and then by the loss of his own two little ones.

He had naturally a bad constitution, and throughout his life he suffered very much from asthma, and from a bilious tendency, besides frequent attacks of fever; so that his whole course was made up of a sort of struggle against difficulties which would have got the mastery over most men. But that his ministry did not suffer, and that he himself grew in grace under these chastenings, is very clear; both from his own memoranda and his letters, as well as from the testimony of others. But, unguided by early teaching, he had to work his way out of many things, which he never had been accustomed to regard as objectionable. In his youth he had been very fond of card-playing and gambling. Naturally enough, under all his cares he lost his taste for such pursuits; but not only so; gradually, as the result of experience and observation, he learnt that these things were unbecoming in a Christian minister. He said that at first he felt it awkward to remove the card-table and replace it by one on which lay a Bible for family prayer. Then it startled him to hear gambling defended by the remark, that Mr. Scott played cards; and when once the propriety of any practice was doubted, it was immediately given up.

Thus his practice kept pace with the clearing up of his doctrinal views; and the continual discipline under which he was at this period kept, rapidly produced good fruit. His asthma was often most distressing;

but also from the remedies prescribed he suffered much; these remedies consisting chiefly in violent antimonial emetics and blisters.

"Mr. Scott has been ill almost ever since you left us," wrote Cowper on one occasion; "and on last Saturday, as on many foregoing Saturdays, he was obliged to clap on a blister by way of preparation for his Sunday labours. He cannot draw a breath upon any other terms."

Soon after his marriage he gave up Stoke and took Ravenstone instead, with Weston Underwood, which he also retained when he removed to Olney. It was at Ravenstone that he found the peace of God in his own soul; and learning something of what it is to preach the gospel, he there also first saw fruits of his labours in the conversion of others.

The salaries of all these curacies varied only from £30 to £50 per annum; so, of course, the pastor was forced to get what help he could by other means. Once he had a pupil; and at another time he had a boarder; and sometimes, when at the greatest extremity, help came in the shape of gifts.

He had already begun to write and to publish; but his works were not then very successful. One of the first was the treatise on Repentance; and in 1777 his "Force of Truth" appeared, which was simply a narrative of his own experience, and which subsequently had a large circulation, and was very useful; but it did not sell largely when it first appeared.

On leaving Olney Mr. Newton had earnestly wished that Mr. Scott might succeed him; and, though not

until another and most unsuitable person had intervened, he found his wish granted.

Mr. Scott was then called to Olney; and he went, not because it increased his income, but because it was a wider sphere of labour. He knew from the first that it would prove no pleasant post; and that the turbulent Antinomian party who had driven Mr. Newton away, would prove quite as troublesome to himself.

Probably they were to him even more harassing; for Mr. Scott had, no doubt, a more determined temperament than his honoured predecessor; and the particular form of evil which was then so rife at Olney was just the one against which he set his face like a flint through his whole course. Mr. Newton had perhaps been too gentle in the matter. "It cannot be doubted," said Mr. Scott's son, in later years, "that the exquisite candour and tenderness of Mr. Newton's character had failed of adequately counteracting the existing tendency of things," which, he added, was under Mr. Scott's ministry greatly amended.

Nevertheless, it must have been an arduous work. Mr. Scott had not Mr. Thornton's £200 per annum to fall back upon; and moreover those who had had the management of a subscription for Mr. Newton, though they promised, did not act for his successor; and had not Lady Austen just then come to the town, and taken the matter up, it is impossible to see how he could have gone on. As a preacher Mr. Scott never appears to have been popular with the

majority; yet wherever he went he was more useful, and had more spiritual children given him, than fall to the lot of many ministers who are far more extensively followed.

He remained for four years at Olney, and went through two very trying seasons during the prevalence of small-pox at one time, and of gaol fever at another; the latter terrible disease having been brought into the town by the wife of a poor man confined for debt. The very existence of such a complaint showed the miserable condition of the prisons of the day; whilst the neglect of the poor when any such complaint broke out in a town or village, plainly showed the need that existed for some improvement in poor laws and parish regulations. Nothing but private help was to be had, and here came in the self-denying pastor, working as doctor, nurse, and relieving officer in one, and thus winning his way among the people.

Whilst at Olney, in addition to his own work, Mr. Scott itinerated a good deal; and often after sitting up gasping for breath all night, he would set off on a preaching-tour of seventy or eighty days, gaining nothing by the service in a pecuniary point of view, but, in fact, being often put to some expense. Sometimes on these occasions he met with great opposition. Once he was hanged in effigy. But he was permitted in after years to learn that much blessing had attended these services.

Mr. Scott never wished to settle down at Olney; though on the death of the aged vicar he might have

had the living; and he only waited for some intimation that it was his Master's will that he should again remove.

That, as he believed, was given to him when, in the year 1785, without offering himself as a candidate, he was almost unanimously elected to be morning preacher and visiting chaplain at the Lock Hospital. His salary there was £80, with no house; but he accepted it under the impression that he would easily obtain as many lectureships as he desired. He was, however, in this disappointed; for not until five years afterwards did he obtain that of St. Mildred's, Bread Street, for which he received only £30 per annum. Every alternate Sunday he for some years also preached at St. Margaret's, Lothbury, at six o'clock in the morning, and received each time the sum of 7s. 6d. It was a seven miles walk, going and returning, and he had to rise at four o'clock to accomplish it; an old servant rising at the same hour to get his breakfast, both having been awakened by a heavy knock at the house-door from the watchman.

At this time of day many may be inclined to suppose that he must have had his walk for nothing, and at best found only a few eccentric auditors. But far from that, there was generally a congregation of between two and three hundred persons; and each time he administered the communion.

Mr. Cecil had this lectureship before him; and Mr. Scott took it when Mr. Cecil was unable to go on. It was the only lecture in London held at so early

an hour, and, as may be supposed, was almost entirely attended by devout and earnest people.

On his return he had family prayer, and then went to the Lock Chapel, where he took the whole service, and where he administered the communion each Sunday when he had not been to Lothbury.

Surely these facts hardly accord with the idea that frequent communions are altogether a recent institution.

A lady who frequently stayed under his roof once wrote thus to a friend of Mr. Scott:—"His life, labours, and devotedness kept him from much knowledge of the world; but the strength of his judgment gave him a rapid insight into passing affairs; and upon the whole I should be inclined to say he was one of the wisest men I ever knew. When fatigued with writing he would come up stairs, where the Bible was generally open; and his relaxation seemed to be, in talking over some text with those whom he found there. And I can truly declare that I never lived in a happier or more united family."

Mr. Scott was an extempore preacher; but his sermons were always carefully prepared. They no doubt suited men of thought, and perhaps of middle age, better than they could have done the bulk any congregation, for they always occupied an hour in the delivery; and though often prepared, from the resources of a well-stored mind, as he passed through the bustle of the London streets, they must have been closely argued and elaborated; considering that an eminent Chancery lawyer declared that he

heard Mr. Scott for professional improvement as well as for religious edification.

"It is hard to make an empty bag stand upright," said one, yet Mr. Scott always stood upright, though nearly always ignorant of the manner in which he was to meet the current month's expenses.

But he had faith to believe that as he was simply engaged in his Master's service, so He would give the things really needed. Nor was this faith put to shame. Mr. Scott's son has told us that his father did really always live comfortably; though he received literally his daily food, and could never speak of to-morrow.

As for his work at the Lock,—that was extremely difficult from the very first; for that hospital was under the management of persons possessed neither of sound judgment nor of much theological learning. There was a great deal of party feeling among the governors, and a great bias towards what is called "high doctrine." Mr. Scott's practical teaching was, therefore, often denounced as Arminian and unsound. Sometimes there was such an outcry that, but for some salutary check from his wife, the good man would have thrown up his position, even without having any other in view; and in those days it was not easy for an evangelical man to find an opportunity of exercising his ministry anywhere.

However, he held on, finding his greatest comfort in his work among the poor patients; and eventually he was really the means of getting the asylum established for female penitents, to which, as well as

to the hospital, he was at length appointed sole chaplian, having, in a great measure, lived down prejudice.

Moreover, amidst all his struggles, and all the opposition which he had to encounter, he was encouraged by the appearance of fruit in former spheres of labour, where at the time he had met with but small success; and this was particularly noticeable with regard to Olney.

The fact was, that God had given to Mr. Scott a power of perseverance and of persistency in any course which he esteemed to be right, which is very rare. When he might have been popular, and when the needs of his family might with great plausibility have been urged in favour of all possible concession, this whole-hearted servant of Christ was resolute in saying always just what in his heart he believed it right that he should say, and what he felt was the truth that he ought then to declare. And, after all, has not the result, so far even as we can see it now, proved that he was not only right but wise? For most evidently blessed was this faithful ministry, and most remarkably blessed, too, has the conscientious parent been in the children for whom he trusted God to provide. There are not many families, even of Christian men, who can look back with such real reverence on their ancestors as his may do.

But we come now to the story of the great work of his life,—the work from which he has derived his chief reputation, his Commentary on the Bible; for it was during his ministry at the Lock that this was

accomplished. And a wonderful story it truly is, take it in what aspect we may.

It will be the best plan first, however, to look at the facts of the case, and see how it came about that such a man should ever have attempted such a work. And his own words explain the thing better than any others :—"As I read over the whole of the Scriptures repeatedly—I trust, with constant prayer, considering how almost every verse might be applied, as if I had been called to preach upon it—I had often thought I should like to preach through the whole Bible; for instruction from every part crowded upon my mind, as I read and meditated from day to day. While I was in this frame of mind, a proposal was made to me, to make notes on the Bible, to be published with the sacred text, in weekly numbers. On this subject I consulted some, who, as I understood, well knew the persons making it, and were themselves respectable characters. I also consulted my own friends, and certainly made it for some time a constant part of my prayers to be directed aright concerning it; but I am convinced that I did not deliberate, consult, and pray so long as I should have done; that I was too hasty in determining; and that a great mixture of self-confidence and presumption of competency for an undertaking which, if not already executed, I should at present tremble to think of, combined with my desire of being usefully employed. I had hardly an idea of the arduousness of the work, and of the various kinds of talent and knowledge which it required, of most of which I was

at that time destitute. I must also own that a guinea a week, with some collateral advantages, promised to be no unacceptable addition to my scanty income; while twenty-five gratuitous copies would prove a useful present to my different relations. It was also a gratification to my active mind that the proposed work would give me full employment, which I most of all desired.

"It never, I own, occurred to me at this time that any man would undertake a publication which must, at the lowest computation, cost £2,000 or £3,000, and which would require £35 to be paid down every week, relying on the sale of an incipient work of an obscure author to carry him through it. This proved I knew little of the world; for such presently appeared to be the situation of the projector. Yet none of my friends cautioned me on this ground.

"After proceeding so far as to have, beyond expectation, the most encouraging prospects of public acceptance, and having become more and more enthusiastically fond of the employment, I learned when fifteen numbers had been printed, that, unless money could be procured from my friends, the design must be abandoned. . . . . In these circumstances, I could not bear to think of dropping so promising a design; and I had not courage to venture on executing it on my own account, though liberal offers of pecuniary assistance were made me for that purpose. The best object of my undertaking had been answered far beyond my hopes; but I stumbled on the worst plan as to secular matters that could

have been adopted; and my vexations and distresses and losses have been a merciful yet painful correction of my rashness, presumption, and folly.

"The cost of the first edition (amounting to 3,000 copies) was not less, I believe, than £6,000 or £7,000. . . . At the close I calculated, in the most favourable manner, my own pecuniary concern in the work, and the result was that, as nearly as I could ascertain, I had neither gained nor lost, but had performed the whole for nothing. As far as I had hoped for some addition to my income I was completely disappointed; but as Providence otherwise supported my family and upheld my credit, I felt well satisfied."

We cannot pursue the whole long story. Suffice it to say that Mr. Scott soon perceived that his pecuniary troubles were only beginning, that money advanced could never be expected back again, and that thus two or three little legacies left to him by friends were utterly lost.

Strange to say, after a great deal of consideration, he concluded to print a new and enlarged edition, on the assurance of the booksellers that as soon as the book was out it would pay its own expenses; and not only would that have been the case, but he would this time have realized a profit, had not an enormous rise both in the price of paper and in the cost of printing taken place. The rest of the story is here subjoined:—

"To conclude this subject at once. I have been favoured to live to superintend a third edition; and by that I have fared somewhat better; but, except the sum given for the copyright since that edition

was concluded, I certainly have not cleared so much as £1,000 for the labours of twenty-one years. I do not, however, regret this. God has provided for me and mine very graciously. By means of this publication my grand design of accomplishing from the press what I found myself little capable of effecting from the pulpit has succeeded beyond my expectations. I needed my trials and difficulties, both to correct the many evils connected with the undertaking, and to counterbalance any flattering circumstances arising out of it."

Soon after this, the whole affair was thrown into Chancery, on the ground of its being "a *laical dealing*, contrary to canons." But the decision was in his favour. "This great work," says the son, "was begun in January, 1788, and the last copy finished for the press June 2, 1792, during which period the whole was twice written over with his own hand."

But the pecuniary trials were not the whole of what he had to bear. He was hurried distressingly; he was also assailed in pamphlets and in other ways; so that his son concludes, "On the whole, we may venture to assert that all the labour, vexation, and distress which attended this work were such as never will, and probably never can be, fully known. Of it, still more truly, it is probable, than of the former production of our great English lexicographer may it be said, that "it was written amid inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow." But it was to answer important ends; and great troubles generally precede great successes. A playful sally of my father's mind may explain the view which he took of

his situation while the work was in progress. The publisher wished that the author's portrait should accompany it. "No," said he; "if one of us appears, we will both appear together; upon the same jaded horse, in the middle of a miry lane, in which it may be impossible to decide whether it is more advisable to push forward or to attempt to return."

These first editions, however, were not all. In the year 1800 he revised the whole, and having taken up his Hebrew again for the purpose, and reading every part in that and in the Greek.

That edition was all gone in a few years; in 1807 he began another; and at the close of 1810 he contracted with the then proprietors for the sale of the copyright, for £2,000. And now we turn to the subject of the quantities of this work which have been sold.

Independently of all that was done with it in England, the Americans eagerly took it up on their own account; and there one bookseller soon obtained 1200 subscribers. Up to 1823, while the English editions amounted to 12,000 copies, the American sales rose to 25,000. Since then, up to 1850, both these totals were more than doubled. Between those dates the sale in England was rapid and constant; while in the next ten years another 10,000 were sold. On the whole, it may safely be affirmed that between 1790 and 1860 the sum paid by English and Americans for this one work exceeded £500,000 sterling.

And it may be mentioned here that he also wrote notes on the "Pilgrim's Progress," besides works which are elsewhere mentioned in this sketch.

We pass on now to other matters.

Mr. Scott did not end his days in London. Even before finally disposing of his Commentary, he had accepted the little living of Aston Sandford, to which in the spring of 1803 he removed.

The village was one of the smallest in England, but the little church was soon well filled on Sundays; and there being but few weekly parochial duties, he found a great deal of time for study, and for revising and collecting all his works.

His health being much broken by frequent illnesses, he was perhaps prematurely unfitted for many kinds of activity. But whilst time had taken from him much of his bodily vigour, it had given him weight and influence. He was now a father in Israel, and a recognised power in the Church—an honoured member of that little band which, in the early part of this century, planned and organized much of the Christian work now going on in the world.

It was an eventful period—a period of change and movement everywhere; and as we study its history, we cannot but see that the preparations then going on for carrying the gospel into every land, were really to form the most important of all the changes, and of all the movements.

They were but thoughts and growing plans at that time, for the Societies, as we now know them, date from the closing years of the last century, and from the opening years of our own. Indeed, as long as John Thornton lived the need for

such organisations was not so apparent or pressing; but when in 1790 he died, and the need became every year more apparent, then came the thoughts of union, in order to carry out the great designs which filled the minds of Christian men. And Mr. Scott was among the foremost of the band of workers.

Nor should we omit to notice that one to whom he himself had during his itinerating tours round Olney carried the message, was, though not of his own Church, but a Baptist, the means of stirring the fire that burnt within his own breast. "If I know anything of the work of God in my soul," wrote Dr. Carey, at that time only a working shoemaker, "I owe it to the preaching of Mr. Scott." He was India's first missionary in the north, and the originator of the Baptist Missionary Society. But others, both Churchmen and Independents, were already stirring, and within three years the London Missionary Society was formed, by the union of some evangelical Churchmen and Dissenters. But this did not satisfy those who appreciated the position of our own church, and felt the responsibility that attached to her; and so the Church Missionary Society quickly followed.

They little realized the vastness of the work in which they were engaged—those holy men who formed that little company—John Newton, Richard Cecil, John Venn, Charles Simeon, Thomas Scott, Henry Thornton, and a few others; but they felt that long enough had the Christian Church kept to herself the message of peace on earth, which once the

angels sang; and that it was time she should awake and to the utmost of her power make known the glad and blessed tidings. Before we have done we shall be able to see something of the way in which the little seed then sown has already grown into a tree, which every year sends out fresh roots and branches, reminding us of the Lord's parable; but here is the place to note the part which Mr. Scott took in a work in which he so heartily sympathized.

It has been said that in reality Mr. John Venn was the father of the society; but if he was the father, it is certain that Mr. Scott was the first secretary, and that he held that post so long as he remained in London. "I had a considerable share in setting this business in motion," he wrote to a friend, "and I should wish to try what can be done; but I am apt to fear that, like most of my plans, it will come to little."

He lived, however, to see that in this, as in many other things, he had not laboured so much in vain as he feared; for in the matter of income alone the receipts of the Church Missionary Society had risen by the year of his death to the sum of £31,149. The society may be said to have practically formed in the year 1800, and next year Mr. Scott preached the first anniversary sermon. In April, 1799, however, the meeting was held in which the question of its formation was decided upon.

When he left London two years after, he was under the necessity of relinquishing the secretariat, but he afterwards helped the good cause in another way

during his retirement at Aston; and that was a very important one;—it was by becoming the tutor of those young men who were preparing to go out as missionaries of the society; and this labour of love he continued for fourteen years, proving himself a most efficient teacher so long as his strength permitted him to work.

Meanwhile the first French revolution had passed, shaking the greater part of Europe as it did so. Then came the great conqueror, Napoleon Buonaparte, under whom the French nation became, as it were, the chastiser of Italy, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Spain, and even Russia.

The hour of God's judgment had indeed come. Mr. Scott lived through that period; he lived also to preach on the Peace, and during all those years he was steadily at work in his parish, amongst his own relations, and more especially caring for his own family—duties but too often neglected by those who take an active part in public work. For his own health and that of his family he spent many of those summers at the seaside, and on board the Margate steamers he frequently attracted notice by the manner in which he rebuked sin or introduced sacred subjects.

The work of the Bible Society was also one which shared his warmest affection; and some of his latest journeys were undertaken in order to support some of its meetings. But whilst he rejoiced in all such labours, and was especially anxious to stir up Christian people to improve their talents, he was

keenly alive to all kinds of pretence and delusion in religion. Indeed, this sort of thoroughness, this sound judgment, this honesty in himself, and desire to see it in others, was a peculiarity in his ministry, and one of its most valuable features.

His children married, and his descendants increased, but his heart was large enough to take them all in; nor did his affections become chilled as he grew older. Some of his grandchildren seem to have been very strongly attached to him, and from his quiet retirement at Aston he wrote them many a paternal letter, full of the best kinds of advice.

His old trials, however, followed him through life. His attacks of asthma were often long and severe; and, moreover, pecuniary embarrassments returned upon him when he supposed himself set free.

On winding up the accounts of his various works in 1813, it appeared that the sales had not been so productive as he had supposed; and that instead of having money to receive, he was considerably indebted to both printer and publisher. He was still deficient by about £1,200. Under the most painful impressions on this subject he sat down to write to some members of his family, as he said, "with a heavier heart than perhaps ever before." "But though sometimes disheartened," he concluded, "I rise above it." From this distress he was relieved by the prompt assistance of the Rev. C. Simeon, of Cambridge. "Your visit to Cambridge," he wrote, "was a blessing to many, who request your acceptance of a few hundred pounds." Other help soon came to

him from all quarters, so that he was quickly cleared of all liabilities; and the promptness of the aid testified how much his brethren had learnt to esteem him.

Probably Mr. Scott was less than some of his contemporaries a preacher who would be followed in the present day. His gifts were not of a popular kind: he was deficient in imagination; he had not Mr. Newton's power of illustration, nor the originality of Mr. Cecil. His style was grave and unadorned, but full of sound judgment and close reasoning. Wherever he was sent, there were always some who valued him highly; and he never was left without fruit in any of his different spheres of labour.

His natural failings lay on the side of temper, pride of intellect, and self-confidence; but from the time when he first embraced the truth of the gospel, he so set himself to struggle against these infirmities, that in after-life he was remarkable for the very opposite qualities. In his latter days his infirmities of body much increased upon him; and he also became very deaf. He wrote in the January of 1821, his last year, that he felt himself wearing down, and that one service on the Lord's Day was all that he could manage, though in his study he could apply nearly as much as usual, only with much uneasiness and weariness of body. "My children," he added, "I trust are in the way to heaven, and useful to others. I have nineteen grandchildren, all hopeful as far as I can see; one, I trust, more than hopeful, and others I hope, coming forward."

His three sons, it should be mentioned, were all clergymen, and his daughter, Mrs. King, the wife of one; and some of his grandchildren have also entered the sacred ministry, whilst others have become esteemed members of other professions,—very notably the late Sir George Gilbert Scott, the well-known architect.

During the last few months of his life this good old man suffered much from dejection of spirits, and would sometimes even burst into tears; though when questioned he would assure his anxious family that it was from no assignable cause. The weight of the flesh bore down his spirit; and as his deafness prevented him from entering much into conversation, it was very difficult for his family to cheer him. Indeed the gloom that sometimes overhung him was distressing to his wife and children and friends alike. It was as a cloud which prevented him from seeing the sun; yet that the sun was there he had no doubt. This gloom, however, in no way related to the prospect before him. His son, when summoned to his death-bed, found him perfectly calm and cheerful in the prospect of dissolution, and even disappointed at any symptoms of recovery. His wish, he said, was decidedly "to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." And his hope of final victory seldom wavered. Yet with the daily paroxysms of fever this dejection returned; and these fits of high fever continued for a fortnight, rendering him the colour of mahogany, and raising his pulse sometimes to a hundred and fifty.

Full of humility, and of a strong sense of the

responsibility which he had incurred by writing so much on such important subjects, he lay, a pitiable object as to bodily sufferings, and clinging tenaciously to the hope which had guided his steps through life, until at length on the 16th of April, 1821, his spirit was released from that body of humiliation by which during the last few weeks of his life it had been so held down, to enter into rest, and to be for ever with his Lord.

This has been the story of a wonderful life in every way when we remember its early beginning; but no doubt the most wonderful passage in it all was the production of that "Commentary," which was, in truth, when all the circumstances are taken into account, quite a phenomenon in the history of literature.

Not many men, not many scholars, have ventured on such a vast undertaking; though many have written on certain portions of the Holy Scripture: and from what has been already said it will be clear to every reader that Thomas Scott hardly understood what he was doing when he began it; that he had not well weighed what it was to attempt to explain critically as well as practically and doctrinally, the oldest book or rather books in the world,—books which were written at different times, by forty different authors, during a period of sixteen hundred years, in Arabia, in Syria, in Greece, and in Rome, as well as in two or more ancient languages. Had he been a scholar by education, he would have been at the outset aware of the difficulties, though perhaps

not in reality so well prepared for the work; but Thomas Scott was not this kind of scholar; he had never so much as seen either a university or a public school.

The scheme, however, was not his own; though, being much in accordance with his own tastes, he somewhat easily fell in with it. It was first suggested to him by a London publisher, and, as the events showed, by one who equally little knew what he was doing. So, when Mr. Scott began to appreciate the position in which he found himself, he began also to be amazed at his own presumption and rashness. It was, in fact, all things considered, an act of temerity such as has rarely been heard of, and one in which failure might naturally have been expected.

Yet failure did not follow, though difficulties and harassing anxieties soon made themselves felt. Instead of failure, there came such a reception from the public as had not previously attended his literary labours; and so much encouragement from his friends, that even when the publisher fell short of funds the author could not find in his heart to give up the work, but chose the alternative of borrowing money —an alternative which involved him in difficulties for years.

So the first edition was hastily sent forth, written, as it often was, with a child on his knee, or rocking the cradle with his foot;—called from his bed, not seldom when very unwell to provide more copy—but still finished in 1792, and what is more, very soon sold, —he himself gaining not one penny by the transac-

tion. The three thousand copies, indeed, all went in a few years. It was reprinted and sold again, so that by 1802 a second and corrected edition, with references, was published, which cost him as much labour in revising as the first had done in writing. That, too, was well received. In 1807 another and still more improved edition was begun. In 1810 he sold the copyright, and the publishers brought out a fourth edition; after which the work was stereotyped, and a fifth and last edition, consisting of six large quarto volumes, the price of which was eight guineas, was brought out after the author's death.

Men may speak slightingly of the book now, if they will, and some possessed of oratorical powers may wonder, and exclaim, "It exhibits no genius, it shows no eloquence, it is neither brilliant nor profound!" Nevertheless these are the facts, or some of them, for there are more to add; and facts speak for themselves.

There were also men in those days quite as capable of judging of the value of a book as there are now; and if they had either censured or despised the work, we know very well that it would have vanished very quickly out of sight and been forgotten.

But they did not. On the contrary, they supported the author, and encouraged him by offering and giving pecuniary assistance whenever they were aware of its being needed.

So the sale went on. It became more rapid than ever after his death; and of this eight guinea book

the demand in England between 1821 and 1845 certainly carried off more than ten thousand copies. In the latter year, on account of the fall in the price of paper and printing, it was offered to the public in a cheaper form, and in four or five years more another ten thousand copies were sold, the demand in America being all the while, of course, on a larger scale. So that it is calculated that the English-speaking readers of various countries have certainly spent more than half a million sterling, on a book written by one who only quitted his sheep-shearing about fifteen years before he first began it!

This is the human side of the question. But can any who believe not only in the real providence of God, but also in the distinct presence of Christ with His Church, suppose that He had nothing to do with this matter? In other words, was the great and extraordinary success of this Commentary only "a lucky chance"? or was Thomas Scott God's chosen instrument for producing that which should best meet the needs of that day? And again, was this an instance in which design, not in the agent, but in One above, was clear and evident? Surely, surely it was.

That it is in a great measure out of date now; that in many ways it does not meet the wants of our times, is very plain; and during the last quarter of a century the work, as well as its author, may be said to be, in a sense, of the past. For, in the course of the last thirty or forty years a spirit of inquiry and research has greatly increased, ancient manuscripts have been

discovered and examined, and the old lands where the scenes of Bible history lay have been visited and explored.

The first scholars of the day have thrown themselves into these matters, and consequently much new light is thrown upon the sacred text. But all this is nothing to the point; and that other and more learned men have now superseded the grazier's son is not in any way to his discredit.

God did not appoint him to work *now;* He set him his task nearly a century back, at a time when a cry for Bibles was beginning to be heard—at a time when a love for the Bible was increasing—when many were longing to have its truths both explained and applied; but also at a time when our modern commentaries would have been, most probably, of comparatively little use.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

1759—1833.

"That good and great man, William Wilberforce."
T. B. Macaulay.

"BIOGRAPHY must be parsimonious of her honours," says Sir James Stephen, "yet even in the age of Burke and Mirabeau, of Napoleon and Wellington, of Goëthe and of Walter Scott, she could not have justly refused them to one who, by paths till then untrodden, reached a social and political eminence never before attained by any man unaided by place, by party, or by the sword."

Eminence among men was not, however, the aim of William Wilberforce, to whom these words refer, and whom the Rev. E. B. Elliott has further designated as "the man of the age." He aimed at leaving the world better than he found it; he aimed at doing, not "a little good in the world only, but all the good he could; and these aims he pursued with such a singleness of purpose as is rarely seen; and so he became—what he undoubtedly was—a truly great man."

That this earth of ours will ever be regenerated during the absence of its rightful Lord, is indeed a vain hope, and one warranted neither by Holy Scripture nor by every-day experience. We improve in many things,

and congratulate ourselves on making progress; but as fast as one evil is swept away another succeeds, and in its turn requires the reformer's hand, and so it will be, till the Saviour returns to reign over a renewed world. "We will not be reformers," say the many. The reformer's is an unenviable office. But if God did not from time to time give us some who have self-denial enough to take it up, where should we all be? Surely our world would soon become a very mass of corruption, if there were not some "salt" in it, more pungent than the rest, some spirits which will not put up with conditions which the weaker kinds tolerate all too easily, or perhaps regard as irremediable.

A block of this salt was he who is to form the subject of this chapter.

"God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners," wrote Wilberforce some two years after he first learnt what it is truly to live.

"Put an end to the slave trade! what conceit!" no doubt said some, and "What insane folly!" reiterated others; but the young man thought only of the duty, and would not stop to consider possibilities. In the name of the Lord he set up his banner, and in His might he carried the stronghold.

Such a life as his indeed makes most lives seem puny; and yet, as the poet tells us, it should point the way to the sublime; for though all are not called to such herculean tasks as he, yet are there but few who are not called to far greater things than they

attempt, while, whether called to great things or little ones, his example should animate us all.

Time was, and that not so very long ago, when it would have been mere waste of words to tell his story; but the events and the actors of to-day soon sweep out of memory those of which the past generations' minds were full. So of late years we have been used to the name of Wilberforce with an episcopal prefix, and much has happened to make the father a man of the past. But this is not as it should be—that one to whom the whole of the human race may be said to owe so much should be forgotten; nor is it fitting that in a volume which has to do with the great and good in the end of the last, and in the early part of this century, such a name should be omitted.

William Wilberforce, then, was born on the 24th of August, 1759, and came, on the father's side, of a highly respectable Yorkshire family, whose records may be traced back to Henry II.; while his mother, before her marriage a Miss Bird, was connected with many well-known families, and related to a Primate, Dr. John Bird Sumner, and his brother, the Bishop of Winchester.

The name was originally Wilberfoss, and only with his grandfather did it obtain its present form. Some of that and preceding generations were merchants in the Baltic trade; and several of them were mayors of Beverley and of Hull. With our young hero, however, the fortunes of the family became changed; and as regards himself it was remarkably true that the boy

was the father of the man; notwithstanding that the motive power which really made Wilberforce what he was, did not for many years take possession of his heart.

He was in childhood, as he continued through life, extremely delicate; but his affectionate disposition, his versatility of taste and talent, his almost unequalled voice and elocution, were all noted then. Those early years were not merely passed in comfort,—for the boy was surrounded by every luxury; while his imagination was early fired by his grandfather's tales of travel, and by his recitals of the famous deeds of the great Duke of Marlborough, to whose intimacy he had been admitted. Then at seven years old the little fellow was sent to the grammar school at Hull, of which soon after, Joseph Milner was appointed to be head master, with his younger brother Isaac as his assistant; and they from time to time would set Wilberforce on a form to read or recite as an example to the other scholars.

Even then, however, he was troubled by what often subsequently tried him, namely, very weak eyes, an ailment which he inherited from his mother. Of one of them, indeed, he eventually lost the sight. Altogether, speaking of his childhood in later years, he would sometimes say that "such a little weakling as he, would hardly have been reared in earlier times or in any other country."

A power of sympathy with other sufferers was, however, one happy result of his own experience. For instance, a friend of his mother, would tell how

on one occasion, when on a visit at the house, and confined by illness to her room, the little fellow would take off his shoes and creep in, peeping round the curtains to inquire whether she felt better.

In his tenth year he lost his father, and then for some time he was sent to be under the care of the uncle after whom he had been named, who had a house at Wimbledon, and another in St. James's Place. He soon became so warmly attached to his uncle and aunt that he loved them as parents; and as she was a sister of John Thornton, an admirer of Whitefield, and intimate with the early Methodists, the boy was under a thoroughly religious influence while he made one of that household.

Good schools were no doubt rare in those days, and in that respect at Wimbledon he was less happily circumstanced than he had been at Hull. The following was his own description of the Wimbledon school :—" Mr. Chalmers, the master, a Scotchman, had an usher of the same nation, whose red beard—for he scarcely shaved once a month—I shall never forget. They taught writing, French, arithmetic, Latin,—with Greek we did not much meddle. It was frequented chiefly by the sons of merchants, and they taught therefore everything and nothing. Here I continued some time as a parlour boarder. I was at first among the lodgers, and I can remember even now the nauseous food with which we were supplied, and which I could not eat without sickness."

He seems to have been a favourite, however, at this school, and left it with the character of being a fine

sharp lad. Nor did all the disagreeables that he must there have met with appear in the least to have soured his temper. Most amiable and impressible was his nature; and one little incident which occurred about that time seems to have left its mark on him for life. It was simply this, that his aunt's brother, the excellent John Thornton, one day gave him a present of money unusually large for a schoolboy, and accompanied the gift with an exhortation to give some of it to the poor.

This seems to have made a great impression on his mind; and we shall hereafter see that in the matter of liberality William Wilberforce was a true follower of John Thornton.

At twelve years old so much was he affected by his aunt's religious instructions that he was beginning to be regarded as a pious boy. That character, however, was about the last thing that his Hull friends desired to hear of him. They took alarm; and it was agreed that his mother should at once fetch him home.

He left Wimbledon, it is said, almost heart-broken; while his aunt openly expressed her sorrow at his removal from religious influence. But his mother sarcastically replied, "You should not fear; if it be a work of grace, you know it cannot fail." "Billy," said his grandfather, "shall travel with Isaac Milner as soon as he is of age, but if Billy turns Methodist he shall not have a sixpence of mine,"—a very singular speech, considering what happened.

So the lad returned to Hull, at that time one of the

gayest cities in the land; and as the grandson of one of the principal inhabitants, and in himself a most attractive boy, he was made much of. He was sent to school at Pocklington, it is true, but there allowed much liberty; and during the latter part of his stay, his life was simply one of idleness and self-indulgence, so often was he out visiting at the houses of the neighbouring gentry, and so much sought after on account of his remarkable talent for singing.

The gaieties of Hull had been at first distasteful to him, and it was almost by force that he was taken to see his first play. Indeed, only by degrees did his religious impressions fade; but at length his friends succeeded. He became as careless as the rest; and his life was spent in a constant round of dissipation.

For his own pleasure, however, he read; and for his own pleasure too, he wrote; and on one occasion, when about fourteen years of age, he most remarkably anticipated his future course by contributing an article to a York paper on "The odious traffic in human flesh."

He also committed much English poetry to memory. And thus equipped, he went up to Cambridge at seventeen, for that period a very fair scholar.

No doubt his aunt mourned over him; and well she might, if she ever knew that on the first night of his entering St. John's College he was introduced to as licentious, foul-mouthed, and hard-drinking a set of men as can well be conceived. She had sound reason for fearing that all her loving teaching had been

lost. But no; after many days it was to come back to him, and probably even at that very time, and in succeeding years, it tended to keep him free from absolute vice.

"I lived amongst them for a time," he said in reference to his first college acquaintances, "though I never relished their society. . . . . Often, indeed, I was horror-struck at their conduct; and after the first year I shook off, in a great measure, my connection with them."

After that he became the centre of a better circle of friends, and made some acquaintances who remained his friends for life; as, for instance, the Rev. T. Gisborne, afterwards his near neighbour at Clapham.

Wherever he went, in fact, he was always an object of attraction, through his wonderful power of infusing life into the company, his fondness for repartee and discussion, and his entire freedom from conceit and vanity. As a man of large means, likewise, he was hailed at Cambridge by many whom his hospitable nature would not allow him to repulse. There was always a great Yorkshire pie in his rooms, of which every one was free to partake; and soon he lived much amongst the Fellows—a thing which rather than otherwise he afterwards had cause to regret.

"They by no means acted towards me the part of Christians or even of honest men," said he, "Their object seemed to be to keep me idle; and if ever I appeared studious they would say, 'Why should a man of your fortune trouble himself with

fagging?' I was a good classic, and acquitted myself well in the college-examinations; but mathematics, which my mind greatly needed, I entirely neglected; and was told that I was too clever to need them."

So passed his college months; and then he returned for his vacations to the great supper and card-parties of Hull; or he travelled with his mother and his only sister in pursuit of pleasure. He had no brother.

Most wonderful does it appear that in such a course he was preserved from profligate excesses. "Yet," said Lord Clarendon, his friend at college and in after-life, "he never was in the smallest degree dissolute."

Nor was his conscience suffered to become altogether hardened, as was evidenced by his refusal, when suddenly called on, to sign the articles—a refusal which cost him the loss of a degree so long as his scruples remained.

The question of the future had been decided by him whilst still at college; for he had made up his mind that he would not follow in the mercantile course pursued by his forefathers. His taste for literature, and perhaps a consciousness of powers which might be better employed, led him to desire public life; and therefore, as a dissolution of Parliament was expected to occur shortly, he offered himself for Hull, and began his canvass at once, without pausing to ask himself what qualifications he possessed for the life of a legislator.

Such, however, was his popularity and influence with his fellow-townsmen, that, although powerful interests were arrayed against him, he was on the day of election very far at the head of the poll. On that business he, like his opponents, had spent much money in a description of bribery, by which the spirit of the law was broken, though not the letter of it. The election, in fact, cost him between £8,000 and £9,000. And, after all, had the writs been issued a few days sooner than they were, he would not have attained his majority, and so would have lost all the money. In later years he would rather have forfeited his seat than have adopted such means of gaining it.; but in those days he did as others did, and thought it no harm.

The *éclat* with which he had gained his election caused him to be enthusiastically received in London. He was welcomed into the highest circles, and immediately elected a member of five of the leading clubs, where he became acquainted with the first men of the day—Sheridan, Pitt, Fox, Fitzpatrick, and many others.

For Pitt he at once conceived a profound admiration. He soon wrote of him that he was the wittiest man he had ever known; and as Pitt was equally attracted to him, a very intimate friendship between the two young men was the result.

As the son of Chatham, Pitt entered Parliament as member for Appleby, a few months later than Wilberforce, under peculiarly advantageous circumstances; but it was soon manifest that he was per-

fectly able to stand on his own foundation, for "he came out at once as a ready-made orator." To be known, therefore, as Pitt's friend was a great advantage to Wilberforce. It gave him an opportunity of being heard and attended to, which otherwise it might have taken time to win; and was, no doubt, very advantageous to the great cause which he was soon to advocate.

But though attentive to Parliamentary business, he was in no hurry to take part in the debates. He bided his time, gaining knowledge and experience; and from the very first he started as an independent man, an adherent of no party, though a supporter of the Government whenever he could conscientiously be so.

He had become a member of Parliament in 1780; and his first speech, made the next year, was on the occasion of his presenting a petition from Hull in a debate on the laws of revenue, which he forcibly attacked as oppressive and unjust. His speech is said to have been an effective one. In 1782 Pitt became a member of Lord Shelburne's Cabinet; in the April of the following year the coalition between those old enemies Lord North and Fox took place, and then Pitt resigned his office.

At that time Wilberforce had entered into possession of his uncle's house at Wimbledon, which came to him at his death; and there Pitt, to whom it was a luxury even to sleep out of town, frequently stayed with him. In the summer of 1783 indeed, when he resigned office on the coming in of the

coalition ministry, he passed four months in that villa with his friend.

"This was," says his biographer, "the most critical period of Wilberforce's course. He had entered in his earliest manhood upon the dissipated scenes of fashionable life, with a large fortune and most acceptable manners. His ready wit, his conversation continually sparkling with polished raillery and courteous repartee, his chastened liveliness, his generous and kindly feelings, all secured him that hazardous applause with which society rewards its ornaments and victims. His rare accomplishment in singing tended to increase the danger. "Wilberforce, we must have you again: the Prince says he will come at any time to hear you sing,' was the flattery which he received after his first meeting with the Prince of Wales in 1782, at one of the luxurious *soirées* of Devonshire House. "He was an admirable mimic also, and until cured of this habit by the kindly severity of old Lord Camden, whom he greatly reverenced, he would set the table in a roar by his perfect imitation of Lord North."

But Wilberforce was moreover an ardent lover of the country, and as his landed property in Yorkshire possessed no country seat, he for seven years rented a house at Rayrigg, on the banks of Lake Windermere, where during the vacations he would retire to revel in the lake scenery, and to indulge in literary leisure amidst his goodly assortment of books, and often, too, in the society of his mother, sister, and many college friends.

Society of one sort or another was a kind of necessity to him; he was formed to live amongst his fellow-creatures; and he did live among them, for he never was fastidious as to either the rank or the mental powers of his companions. Somehow or other he was always mingling with his kind; and therefore, when debarred from intercourse with men and women of wit and talent, of rank, beauty, or fashion, he threw himself into the pursuits of a country village, and easily found much to interest him and to draw out his sympathies in the cares or the pleasures of small shopkeepers or country-folk; relishing very keenly the study of characters with which he thus met.

The man who hereafter was to exercise so wonderful an influence over his fellow-men had thus first lived amongst them.

In after-years it was said of him that he touched life in a most unusual number of points; and as a consequence life was to him a very pleasant thing. At this period, certainly, a large share of what this world can give to make a young man happy he had within his reach. In the summer of 1783 he gained his first experience of foreign travel.

It was on the 11th of September of that year that he and Pitt, and Mr. Eliot, a mutual friend, met at Canterbury, and next day crossed to Calais. Only in the January of that year had the peace been signed in Paris which declared the United States to be independent of England; and it was not much to be wondered at that the arrival of three members

of the British Parliament in a country which had aided and abetted the colonists in their rebellion against the mother-country should have been regarded as suspicious by M. Du Chatel, the Intendant of Police at Rheims; nor that he should go immediately to consult a certain Abbé on the subject. The result of the suspicion was a call from the Abbé himself, with a view to find out their object; but he was soon fully satisfied, liked their appearance and manners, and very freely made them an offer of his services while they remained. On this Pitt cried, "Here we are in the midst of Champagne, and can't get any tolerable wine;" and the Abbé's cellars speedily supplied some of the choicest. For the next fortnight he was their constant companion; and nothing could exceed his kindness,—a kindness not forgotten by Wilberforce when, after the Revolution, this same poor Abbé found himself stripped of his property, and a penniless refugee in England.

It was at that time, however, through his interest and introductions, that the three young men soon found themselves, according to their desire, in the best French society, for they were there "to study, not the country, but the people;"—so said Wilberforce.

After a time they proceeded to Paris, and there met, amongst other celebrities, La Fayette, the French champion of America, and Benjamin Franklin, the diplomatic American agent. When the court moved on to Fontainebleau, they followed it, and at Madame de Polignac's they found themselves thrown into familiar intercourse with Marie Antoinette, who

chatted and rallied them with easy grace; while they joined the hunts in which Louis XVI. himself took part.

From all this pleasant excitement they were, however, recalled by a royal summons to return and oppose the India Bill brought in by Mr. Fox, and in forming which Burke also had taken part. This was a measure introduced by the coalition ministry, then the great object of popular invective. On the question of the long American war the leaders, Lord North and Fox, had always been bitterly opposed. They had now, to the general astonishment, coalesced; and their union, as well as this India Bill, was supposed to threaten both the freedom of the people and the privileges of the Crown. Lord Thurlow declared that if the Bill passed, the Crown of England would be no longer worth a man of honour's wearing, and the King said that he would consider those his enemies who voted for it. Hence the very next day after the division he sent to Lord North and Fox to require them to deliver up their seals of office, and Pitt, then only in his twenty-fifth year, was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In this crisis, then, Wilberforce came to the front, and proved Pitt's most efficient friend. With this view to help him, he attended a meeting at York with the design of defeating the influence of the great Yorkshire Whig families; and there Boswell heard him speak. "I saw," he said, "what seemed a mere shrimp mount on the table; but as I

listened, he grew and grew, until the shrimp became a whale." Then the cry arose, "Wilberforce and liberty!" which was soon changed into "Wilberforce for Yorkshire!" and soon, without a contest, William Wilberforce was elected member for that great county, which honourable post he retained through many succeeding Parliaments; and at last only voluntarily resigned.

By all these steps, then, was he brought into a favourable position for fighting a greater battle than that against the coalition ministry.

"His twenty-fifth birthday," says his biographer, "was spent on the topmost wave and highest flow of those frivolous amusements which had swallowed up so large a portion of his youth."

But now we come to an entire change. "The appointed hour had struck," says Sir James Stephen, "from which a new direction was to be given to this favourite of nature and of fortune. . . . . Before him" was about "to open a new world, and within him a new creation."

In the following May he went up to London, took his seat as member for Yorkshire, and attended diligently through all that session, swelling the triumphant majorities which made his friend for so long the wielder of his country's destinies. But he had already planned another Continental tour, and when the vacation came, he went, accompanied by his mother, sister, two female friends, and by Isaac Milner, whom on the failure of another acquaintance he had invited to join them, across to Paris and on to

Lyons, where, embarking on the Rhone, they dropped down to Avignon, and subsequently proceeded to Nice.

William Wilberforce did not then know what probably his grandfather may hardly have suspected, that Isaac Milner's religious views accorded with those of his elder brother. Had he done so—we have his own word for it—he would not have at this time invited him to be his companion. But these opinions did not then exercise that influence on Isaac Milner's life which they subsequently obtained. He joined in Sunday parties, and lived like the rest of the world. It was, in short, a casual remark of Wilberforce's that elicited the truth. "He goes too far," said the latter, speaking of a good man. "Not a bit too far," returned Milner; and then a discussion followed. After a while Wilberforce took up a volume which had been given by Mr. Unwin, the friend of Cowper, to one of their travelling companions. It was Doddridge's "Rise and Progress." "What sort of a book is this?" asked Wilberforce. "The best book in the world," returned his friend, and after a little they began to read it together. An amount of interest was awakened; and when his reason was convinced, then at length his heart began to feel; and ere long he was compelled to own that Isaac Milner was in the right.

This seems to have been the process, and it is not exactly what might have been anticipated in one of his warm and excitable temperament; but thus he speaks of the matter.

The party remained abroad for many months, though Wilberforce had to return home during the interval for a short time on business. When they went back to England, Milner and he travelled alone together from Nice, and the Greek Testament was during that journey the main subject of their earnest converse. As we have seen, Wilberforce had known its great truths long before, while under his aunt's care; and now back came all those thoughts and feelings which he had so long put from him, until the recollection of his wasted years, talents, and opportunities filled him with bitter sorrow and remorse. "What folly, what madness to live on in a state from which any sudden call out of this world would consign him to endless misery!" he began seriously to think. And then the black ingratitude of his past life humbled him in the very dust. Gradually had he come to feel thus; for his feelings of remorse deepened as time went by, until for months together he fell into a state of the greatest depression, of which many years afterwards he said that "nothing which he had ever read in the accounts of others exceeded what he himself had felt." He had sinned against that Saviour who had died for him; he had sinned, too, against much long-suffering forbearance on the part of his heavenly Father. These thoughts weighed him down. After a time, however, the freedom and fulness of the Gospel-promises went home to his heart, and gradually produced in him a settled peace of conscience. Then very deliberately did he dedicate himself to the service of the God and Saviour whom

he had so long neglected, and resolve to begin an entirely new course of life.

It was a stedfast resolve, and stedfastly persevered in. Few, very few persons carry out such resolutions in the self-denying and consistent manner in which he did. Returning home in November, 1785, a new man, changed in all his aims and aspirations from what he had been, the transformation was manifest to all. It could not be hid. "There are occurrences," to quote Sir James Stephen once more, "explicable on no hypothesis but that of the direct intervention of the supreme Ruler of the universe for the spiritual improvement of His creatures," and such an intervention—who can doubt it?—had at length taken place with regard to the subject of our present study.

He was naturally, as I have said, the very reverse of a conceited, self-occupied man; he was not by any means one to talk greatly about himself; yet he was an honest, open-hearted man, and therefore he very soon felt that this great change must be confessed.

So as opportunities occurred he quietly made it known; nor was it long before he told even Pitt himself. Of that confession he has recorded what could scarcely have been expected—that Pitt's answer was full of kindness. "Nothing I had told him," he said, "could affect our friendship."

To his only sister, between whom and himself a strong affection existed, he wrote fully and wisely; and his mother was soon made aware that, after all her exertions against such a result, her son had

actually become, in the language of those days, "a Methodist." With his own accustomed loving gentleness, however, he made it his great study on his first subsequent visit to disarm her prejudices, by greater deference than ever to her wishes, greater respect for her opinion, and more affectionate solicitude for her comfort. "If this be madness," said one of his mother's friends, who was a witness of his efforts, "I hope he will bite us all."

The habit of keeping diaries was then more in fashion than in our own day; and Wilberforce had kept one long before he dreamt of writing down his own personal feelings. It is interesting, therefore, to compare his entries in 1783 and those of two years later.

"Dec. 2.—Catch Club, Sandwich; then opera. Mrs. Crewe there. Supped Lord George's: Duchess of Portland. Went to see Mrs. Siddons—Mrs. Crewe at play," and so on.

Two years later:—

"Began this night to have family prayers."

"Nov. 30.—Thought seriously of going to converse with Mr. Newton."

In the end he wrote to Mr. Newton; then called and had a long conversation with him.

"Meditated on the sinfulness of my own heart—its blindness and weakness. Truly I am 'wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked' (Rev. iii. 17)."

He now spent several hours daily in the earnest study of the Scriptures; he took lodgings in the Adelphi that he might be within reach of pastoral in-

struction which simply inculcated gospel truths; and he began to seek the friendship of those who feared God. He withdrew his name from all the clubs of which he was a member—a precaution which he thought essential to his safety in the critical circumstances in which he was placed. "Living in town," he says, "disagrees with me: I must endeavour to find Christian converse in the country."

And now, while the angels above were rejoicing over this returned sinner, it may easily be supposed that many on earth whose songs were in union with theirs would welcome one like him into their society; and not for his own sake merely, but as a young champion of everything that was good—one from whom much might be expected. A warm letter from his connection, Mr. Thornton, accordingly soon reached him, and many another name of the same stamp was quickly found in the list of his friends.

The following is from Mr. Thornton:—

"Clapham, Dec. 24, 1785.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You may easier conceive than I can express, the satisfaction I had from a few minutes' converse with Mr. Newton yesterday. As in nature so in grace, what comes very quickly forward rarely abides long. I am aware of your difficulties, which call for great prudence and caution. Those who believe must not make haste, but be content to go God's pace, and watch the leadings of His providence as of the pillar and cloud formerly. There is a

danger in running from church to church to hear; more profit is obtained under one or two ministers. You cannot be too wary in forming connections. The fewer new friends, perhaps, the better. I shall at any time be glad to see you here, and can quarter you and let you be as retired as possible, and hope we shall never be on a footing of ceremony.

"I am, my dear sir,
"Your devoted kinsman,
"JOHN THORNTON."

Fully recognising the peculiar sphere in which he was called to do his life-work, William Wilberforce at once, and in the first place, set himself to the apportioning of his time, and to the acquisition of regular habits, more especially in the matter of study. It was difficult for him, with his large acquaintance and public duties, to find the quiet that he wished; but he set himself to read, and that with such a right good will, not in one line only, but in every branch of literature which he felt to be useful—from light to heavy and heavy to light, and so his mind soon came to be a storehouse of knowledge. Keeping up this habit, too, from youth to age, with only the sight of one eye, and when, to use up the odds and ends of time, he had to employ a reader to attend him while dressing, he was really *au fait* in most subjects, and in a position to form a judgment on most questions.

But withal he went to work. Society and books were not to engross a Christian public man. This

was his opening manhood; and he must stand forth on the world's stage.

Life henceforth seemed to him so full of objects, and the world so full of sin, that there was no time to trifle. He had seen enough of folly, and vice, and evil to lead him, when now he thought thereon, to feel that the reformation of his country's manners was the first pressing claim. Then some of the laws troubled him: he saw that men and women were even hanged for mere trifles, whilst open vice and crime frequently went unpunished.

So he began to labour in the collection of facts; then he went to the bishops for help, and afterwards applied for a royal proclamation on the subject of the suppression of vice. He was, indeed, eventually either the originator or the reviver of a society which had that object for its end.

This was his first object. "God has set before me the reformation of my country's wrongs," he wrote in his diary at that time. And he never lost sight of it as long as he lived. It was therefore with his mind full of thoughts of great wrongs which called for remedies of some strong kind, that he went down to visit Hannah More at her cottage at Cowslip Green, near to the Cheddar Hills. He had seen how in many parts of England vast populations were growing up with none to care for either their souls or their morals;—how, often the pastor, who should have tended the flock, was non-resident;—how, owing to the spread of latitudinarian views, the clergy were growing indifferent

about their work; and now his heart burned within him as the picture of all this spiritual and moral desolation presented itself to his view. Moreover, the reading of Dr. Woodward's "History of the Society of the Reformation of Manners in Queen Anne's Day" had acted on him as a match to a mine; and thus he was not only keen to see the evil, but eager to apply any remedy within reach.

What he saw at Cheddar was a sort of illustration of these facts brought home to him. The spiritual destitution of all this large district, seen with his own eyes, greatly affected him. "The cliffs of Cheddar," wrote Miss Patty More in her journal, "are esteemed the greatest curiosity in these parts. We recommend Mr. W. not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. . . . . He went. I was in the parlour when he returned. With the eagerness of vanity, having recommended the pleasure, I inquired how he liked the cliffs. He replied, they were very fine; but the poverty and distress of the people were dreadful. . . . . I said to his sister and mine that I feared Mr. W. was not well. The cold chicken and wine, put into the carriage for his dinner, were returned untouched. Mr. W. returned at supper, seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant, at his desire, was dismissed, when immediately he began, "Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Ched-

dar." He then proceeded to a particular account of his day,—of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor. There was no resident ministry, no manufactory, nor did there appear any dawn of comfort either in their spiritual or temporal condition. The method or possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour; it was at length decided in a few words by Mr. W.'s exclaiming, "If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense." . . . . Mr. W. and his sister left us a day or two afterwards. We turned many schemes in our heads, in every possible way; at length those measures were adopted which led to the foundation of the different schools."

An intimate friendship was henceforth established between the Misses More and Mr. Wilberforce; and it was founded on a very high mutual esteem. Moreover he ever retained his interest in this undertaking, and was always ready with the pecuniary help.

"I will be at the expense," had been no mere promise. As years rolled on, there are various indications that he was ready to do more than he had said. The fact was, however, that Wilberforce's Christianity had affected his whole being. It made him liberal; and in order that he might be liberal he early became economical. That villa at Wimbledon was to him a great luxury; because he so delighted to escape from London as occasion offered, if it were only for a night, and there to entertain his friends; but he soon began to feel that it was an unnecessary expense, and resolved to give it up.

The visit to Hannah More, which was the cause of the great work soon after begun, was only the first of many. Whenever he could spare time he was fond of running down to Cowslip Green, and watching its progress; and the strong and constant interest which he could thus feel in one little corner of the land, was only a specimen of his general character. Already had he that great cause in hand which issued in the freeing of millions of our race from slavery; and yet his heart was always warm for this or any other special calls on his attention.

It was in 1789, the very year of the first French Revolution, that he paid that very fruitful visit to Cowslip Green; but three years before that, the message had been recognised which summoned him to the stupendous task with which his name will ever be connected. Nor is it unworthy of note that it was through the instrumentality of a woman that *this* call also was made.

It is time now to tell that story.

In the autumn of 1786 a memorable conversation took place at the house of Sir Charles Middleton (afterwards Lord Barham) at Teston, near Maidstone, in Kent, at which a Mr. Ramsay was present. This Mr. Ramsay had lived much in the West Indies, and knew the indignities and cruelties to which the poor negroes were subjected. Previously to this he had written a book, calling attention "to the traffic in slaves." On this occasion the late Christian Ignatius Latrobe was present; and he afterwards wrote an account of the conversation. "Lady

Middleton, a benevolent and energetic person," he says, "was deeply affected at Mr. Ramsay's statements, and pressed her husband, who was M.P. for Rochester, to bring the matter before Parliament. Sir Charles admitted that the thing ought to be done; but he said that he, who had never yet made a single speech in the House, was certainly not the man to advocate such a cause. He added, however, that if they could find the right person, he would gladly support him."

Several men were named, and at last some one spoke of Mr. Wilberforce as a promising young man, who had lately come out; and at Lady Middleton's instance—for she would not let the matter rest—he was written to. The reply came speedily, and it was to this effect,—that though feeling himself quite unequal to such a task, he would not altogether decline it, but would, as soon as possible, see them and consult over the matter. The application, as he afterwards himself said, was just one of those many impulses which were all giving to his mind the same direction.

Thus, then, began the work which was henceforth to be the main business of his life during the next twenty years, at the end of which time God so far gave him his heart's desire that the abolition of the slave trade was accomplished.

Considering the enormous difficulties of the undertaking, and how nearly impossible it is to persuade large bodies of men to give up ancient sins—sins which have been patronized and protected for cen-

turies,—sins which are profitable and "respectable," —we may now look back with astonishment on the success granted to William Wilberforce, the son of a merchant in Hull, in the deliverance of the country from so great and long-cherished a wickedness.

To tell the progress of the struggle, of all the labour entailed, of how Pitt from the first warmly espoused the work, but died years before it was accomplished; of how Fox also heartily supported it, but also died before success came; of how at first that success seemed likely to be speedy, and then how the storms of opposition rose from the West Indian planters and their friends; how poor Ramsay actually sank under the bitter persecution which assailed him; how, too, some of the highest personages in the realm arrayed themselves on the wrong side—all this is far too long to tell in this brief sketch. Those who care to read the records of a noble and bloodless war will find all the details in those five volumes compiled by his sons; and there they will see how, nothing daunted, our hero and his co-workers waited and watched until difficulties were removed, one by one; how, when they could not gain all that they desired at first, they brought forward and carried measures of relief, and were continually engaged in agitating the subject, in rousing the country, and in trying to influence foreign powers in the same direction, until, on the 25th of March, 1807, the royal assent was given, and the bill became a law which put an end to the slave-trade. No more horrible slavers might henceforth go out under the British

flag; no more slaves might be taken; so much was gained, and it was an immense step in advance, though it was not all.

"God will bless this country," wrote Mr. Wilberforce in heartfelt thankfulness. "The first authentic account of the defeat of the French has come to-day." And, indeed, up to that time the political outlook had been very black; but we may at least note that in the very year which closed that hateful traffic the tide seemed to turn, and the victories of Wellington began.

Singularly enough, a dread of "French principles," that is, the loud demand for liberty which accompanied all the horrors of the Revolution, had been a principal cause of retarding the measure; so that when in the year 1794 the Commons passed the bill, the Lords actually threw it out; and even in 1804, when the Lower House, seeing that there could be but one ending to the long struggle, again passed it by a large majority, the Peers once more insisted on delay, so that the matter dragged on for three years longer. Yet even when passed, every one felt that it was but a half-way measure; and many a question then arose about the retention of those whom no one had ever any right to possess.

Slavery had existed almost as long as the world; it had never been, *in so many words*, condemned in Scripture. Thus argued even many of the readers of Holy Writ; not considering the very great difference between the possession of prisoners taken in war, who often could not safely be released, or the

voluntary, yet, according to the law of Moses, limited slavery of those who could not support themselves; and that stealing in cold blood of human beings from one country in order to make them work for their captors in another, which had now gone on for three whole centuries under the British flag.

Nevertheless right and truth will prevail, and five-and-twenty years later, just as life was ebbing, and earthly things were becoming dim to the great leader of this great struggle, God gave him to see the full result of this his life's toil; when in 1833 the abolition of slavery itself throughout the British empire was proclaimed.

Standing as we do now within little more than a score of years from the end of this wonderful nineteenth century, and accustomed to speak of England as the land of the free, we should do well to remember amidst all our boastings, that not yet has half a century passed away since we wiped off the foul disgrace, and be chary how we forget the name of one who helped us to do it.

That he ever took up the work, says his son, was owing to the religious change which had passed on him; and that the country was ready for it, we may well add, was one result of the great revival, and a substantial proof of its reality.

While, however, this was Mr. Wilberforce's special work, it was far from being the only great one in which he was a principal worker.

The renewal of the East India Company's Charter in 1793 led him to attempt something in Parliament

for the moral and religious good of the millions of our Hindoo fellow-subjects.

During the Georgian period a profound indifference had settled upon the mind of the nation on the subject of the preaching of the gospel in foreign lands; so that whilst we English had felt ourselves at liberty to use the poor negroes as beasts of burden, we had apparently lost sight of the fact that for the Hindoos, equally with ourselves, the Saviour had died.

But at length on this other stupendous question, also, England was beginning to wake, or rather perhaps we should say the matter was stirring in the hearts of some of her sons, who were to be used to awaken her. The guilt of this national indifference and neglect had for several years past been a subject of serious thought and discussion among both Churchmen and Dissenters; and the great missionary societies, which we now know so well, were already proposed, and some of them were in course of formation. But among public men, known in Parliament, no one interested himself more than William Wilberforce.

Of his exertions at this time his son writes, "After having studied the subject with strenuous and persevering diligence, and consulted long with the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Speaker, and his friend Charles Grant, he brought the question before the House of Commons in the form of a set of resolutions which were agreed to in Committee, and entered on the Journals.

"These resolutions pledged the House in general

terms to the 'peculiar and bounden duty of promoting by all just and prudent means the religious improvement' of the native Hindoos." Two days afterwards he proposed specific resolutions for sending schoolmasters and chaplains throughout India, and to these measures Mr. Dundas had promised his support.

All at first seemed hopeful. Mr. Wilberforce and his friends were eagerly taking counsel together, and thinking they were going to succeed. In his journal he wrote, under date May, 1793, "Through God's help, got the East Indian resolutions on quietly. Sunday, 19.—Scott, morning; Cecil, afternoon; called at Grant's, Miss More there. My time is contracted and my eyes bad; yet I must record the grace and goodness of God in enabling me to be the instrument of carrying through the East India clauses."

But the East Indian Directors immediately met, and strongly reprobated his clauses, which, therefore, on the third reading of the bill, were struck out, with Dundas's consent after all; and, to use Wilberforce's indignant words, "our territories in Hindostan, with their twenty millions of people included, left in undisturbed and peaceable possession, and committed to the providential protection of Brahma!"

But as with the slave trade, so in this cause he would not give in. Though bitterly disappointed, he only waited for the next opportunity that should arise; and meantime he made an attempt to help India in another direction. He was in fact one of the

founders of that vast organization for carrying the gospel to the heathen in all lands which we so well know as the Church Missionary Society. Of that little band in which the names of Newton, Cecil, John Venn, Scott, Simeon, and Charles Grant were prominent, he made one; and from 1798 to 1800, when the society was really formed, his attention was much occupied with this business; which indeed continued to the end of his life to be to him one of the intensest interest. Years passed; and the agitation of the subject proved not to have been without its effect in Parliament; while over all the land too a change of opinion was coming; so that by the time when the Charter of the Company required another renewal, which was in the year 1813, there was far more real ground to hope for success; and as that year drew on, all who were interested about it, and he very conspicuously among them, busied themselves most earnestly in the agitation of the subject by every means which they could think of; "feeling," as he said, "that it was the greatest subject which men ever pursued." So once more, too, the intense interest he felt about it, joined to his position in Parliament, made him the prominent leader.

Nor did disappointment at this time await him, and those who, like him, had their hearts in the cause. The motion was again made: there was a debate on it; and next day he thus wrote to his wife:—

"Blessed be God, we carried our question triumphantly about three, or later, this morning." "We were often alarmed," he wrote to another friend;

"The petitions, of which there never were so many, have carried our question instrumentally,—the good providence of God really. . . . The prospect is very encouraging."

"His own personal influence," says his son, "had been a powerful instrument in gaining this result. Never had he been able to bring forward in the House so openly his own religious principles; never had they been so respectfully received." He spoke for three hours; but nobody seemed fatigued. And now as we look back and ask whether this service of obtaining free course for the gospel in India, or that which gave the death-blow to slavery, were the greater, we may find it difficult to decide. But this we can easily see, and may affirm without much fear of contradiction, that not many men have been favoured to be the leader in two such glorious victories.

Surprising enough it does appear that in the midst of so much engrossing work, the idea of writing a book, or, as he at first styled it, a tract, should ever have occurred to him.

But, many years before the date which our narrative has now reached, had "Practical Christianity" appeared. In fact, he began that work immediately after the rejection of his East India clauses in 1793. Long had he desired to address his countrymen on their estimate and practice of religious duty, and in the August of that year, just after paying a visit to Cowslip Green, he made a beginning, the intention being simply to produce a sort of tract. It was from this beginning, however, that his famous work arose. But

though so ready and fluent a speaker, William Wilberforce does not appear to have been a facile writer; and in fact it was four years before this book was published. But then he had taken the subject up in no casual way; it was rather as a serious message which was laid on his mind to deliver to his countrymen. As the work of a layman, and of one whom now every one knew as the advocate of certain great public measures, it might be read—he had a hope that it would be read, by many who would scornfully put aside all other religious books.

So it was a matter that he kept ever in mind, and which he pondered over from time to time in every season of leisure, and worked upon when he could.

In the autumn of that same year, 1793, we find him going to visit his friend Mr. Gisborne at Yoxall Lodge, in Yorkshire, passing two months there, and giving all his leisure in preparing materials for his book. But many engagements intervened; and it was not until the 12th of April, 1797, that the work was published.

It was strange how much anxiety there was amongst his friends, lest through this literary attempt his reputation should be damaged. Dr. Milner had strongly dissuaded him all through its progress. "A person who stands so high for talent," wrote another, "must risk much in point of fame at least, by publishing upon a subject of which there have been the greatest exertions of genius." Even his publisher was apprehensive. "You mean to put your name to the work?" he said—"Then I think we may venture

on five hundred copies." He must have been somewhat surprised to find that in a few days the whole five hundred were gone, and that it was necessary to go to press again. In short, in half a year 7,500 copies were sold! It had pleased all his friends; and warm congratulations soon poured in. "I thought I knew you well, but I know you better now, my dearest excellent Wilber.," wrote one of the most intimate, Lord Muncaster. "I see no reason why you should wish to have given it another year's consideration," said his friend Mr. James Gordon; "the world would only have been so much the worse by one year." "The bishops in general much approve of it, and many of his gay and political friends admire and approve of it. Several have recognised the likeness of themselves. The better part of the religious world, and especially the Church of England, prize it most highly, and consider it as producing an era in the history of the Church," wrote Mr. H. Thornton. "I myself am one who contemplate it as a most important work.

"I deem it the most valuable and important publication of the present age," said Mr. Newton; "such a book, by such a man, and at such a time!" he exclaimed. "A book which must and will be read by persons in the higher circles, who are quite inaccessible to us little folk, who will neither hear what we say nor read what we write,—I am filled with wonder and with hope. I accept it as a token for good; yea, as the brightest token I can discern in this dark and perilous day."

"The effect of the book," says his son, "can scarcely be overrated. Its circulation was at that time altogether without precedent." It was eagerly read in India, wrote Henry Martyn in 1807; and in America it was reprinted and rapidly sold: besides which it was translated into the French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German languages; and its influence was proportionate to its success." Indeed, "not a year passed throughout his after-life in which he did not receive fresh testimonies to the blessed effects which it pleased God to produce through his publication."

"Men of the first rank and intellect, clergy and laity, traced to it their serious impressions of religion." Yet "amidst these circumstances," to quote again from the large memoir, his "sobriety of mind remained unshaken." "I was much struck," says one who was with him at Bath, "with his entire simplicity of manners. The place was very full; the sensation which his work produced drew upon him much observation, but he seemed neither flattered nor embarrassed by the interest he excited."

The book, in fact, made a prodigious stir. We have had since then many another work of the same character; but in the reign of George III. this stood alone; and alone it went abroad to carry its message to many a land where darkness, or superstition, or infidelity, or indifference prevailed.

It was *the book suited for the day.* In past ages men had from time to time written with the same object in view; but there was nothing of the kind

at that time much read. Like Cowper's poems, and Scott's Commentary, it appeared; and like each of them stood by itself; but in this case, as the work of a man of high position, to compel attention. The following is a single instance of the great blessing that attended it.

A young college friend of Legh Richmond's sent him the book, merely to ask his opinion of it. Young Richmond had only just been ordained, having taken up "the Church" as a profession, but knowing no more of the gospel than Wilberforce had once done. He read it; and through the thoughts thus put into his mind he too was changed into another man. And how much depended on that change! Certainly the results can never be known in our time; for, to say nothing now of the direct effects of Legh Richmond's preaching, he in his turn became an author—not of elaborate treatises, but of a few simple narratives of cases met with in the course of his ministry, "The Young Cottager," "The Dairyman's Daughter," and "The Negro Servant."

He had a special talent for descriptive narrative, and nothing of the kind had yet been seen. These little histories circulated in the most wonderful way. They were translated into almost every known language; and the sale soon amounted to millions. But, better far, well-authenticated cases of conversion as the result of their perusal were recorded so frequently as to become quite familiar; so that if they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars in the world to come, it must be difficult indeed to form an

idea of the blessedness of Legh Richmond in that future state: and yet it was on his perusal of Wilberforce's "Practical Christianity" that, in God's providence, it all depended.

Yet this man, whom God used in so many different ways, had a very humble opinion of himself; and one reason for this perhaps was that he was constantly kept under discipline, and frequently in God's great school of sickness. He suffered much all through his life, and had such serious illnesses that his life was often despaired of. In his old age peace seems to have filled his mind; but in earlier years we find in his diary constant complaints of the doubts that would intrude, and of the coldness and deadness which he could not overcome.

"Few men," said Mr. Henry Thornton, "have been blessed with worthier or better friends than have fallen to my lot. Mr. Wilberforce stands at the head of these, for he was the friend of my youth. I owed much to him in every sense, soon after I came out in life; for his enlarged mind, his affectionate and condescending manners, his very superior piety, were exactly calculated to supply what was wanting to my improvement and my establishment in a right course. It is chiefly through him that I have been introduced to a variety of other most valuable associates. When I entered life I saw a great deal of dishonourable conduct among people who made great profession of religion. In my father's house I met with persons of this sort. This so disgusted me that, had it not been for the admirable pattern of consistency and disin-

terestedness which I saw in Mr. Wilberforce, I should have been in danger of a sort of infidelity."

Wilberforce lived, indeed, through such troublous times that it was impossible for him to dwell long on his own feelings—such constant need was there of action. "I am making up my mind cautiously and maturely, and therefore slowly," he wrote in 1794, "what is the best course to be observed by Great Britain in the present critical emergency." And the result of this consideration was that he felt bound to oppose a measure of Pitt's regarding the continuance of the war with France; and thereby to his great sorrow, to bring on a temporary estrangement between himself and his distinguished friend. An immense amount of revolutionary feeling pervaded the country; and about that very time it was fostered by the appearance of Thomas Paine's book on the Rights of Man. There were riots in London, and risings at York, and, to crown all, a mutiny in the fleet. This last most alarming business was indeed in every one's mind just when his book appeared in the April of 1797.

On that occasion Mr. Wilberforce wrote thus to a friend:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I came here on Thursday night, and unless I should be forced up again by the call of business, I mean to remain here a fortnight longer.

"A mutiny in our grand fleet! Do you remember the first piece in the first volume of Cowper? How does this tend to confound the insolence and strike terror to the hearts of our rulers, who vainly imagined

that they might in this line defy almost the power of Providence itself! God will humble the lofty; and I can truly declare that for several years Mr. Pitt's swaggering speeches in opening the Budget, and the swelling acclamations with which they were received, have chilled my heart at the very moment, and made me augur some future abasement.—I am, my dear sir, yours, very sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

He was then still a bachelor, and wearied, as he sometimes was, from morning to night with public business, he said that he felt as if he ought always to remain one. He had then reached the age of thirty-six; but, nevertheless, within a few months he met Miss Barbara Ann Spooner, and changed his mind. They were shortly after married; and he immediately conducted his bride to Cowslip Green, to visit his dear friends the Misses More. In due time a family of children sprang up around him, with whom he delighted to spend all his hours of leisure, and on whom he appears to have lavished his best affections and most thoughtful care. In private life he seems to have had Mr. Thornton's example ever before him, and to have uniformly kept down all personal and domestic expenses, in order that he might be able to give as liberally as he felt he ought to do. His charities as well as his interests were numerous and of every variety; private and individual cases sharing his aid with general and public causes.

If, therefore, his family were, during all his busiest years debarred from enjoying much of their father's

company, they had at least a very instructive example in him. "He had a hand," says one of his biographers, "in most of the schemes of public benevolence which were projected and matured during the half-century that followed the peace of '83": whether the laws were to be made more merciful, national education established, Ireland civilized, prison discipline improved, churches and clergy multiplied, or missions to the heathen arranged,—his sanction, his eloquence, his advice, were regarded as indispensable to success; so that Hannah More once laughingly likened his ante-room to a den of clean and unclean beasts. That any one man could have assumed the actual superintendence of all the complicated machinery for good which was then put in action seems almost to have required a constant miracle. During many years of his life he devoted to acts of munificence from a third to a fourth part of his actual income; and where any of the money thus bestowed was given to individual cases, it was always offered in such a way as to take away the feeling of obligation. He aided the Elland Society — established with a view to assist poor but pious young men to enter the ministry. He was one of the first to help Kirke White, and he allowed a pension to Charles Wesley's widow. When Hannah More began to feel the approach of old age, he begged her to let him provide her with a carriage, that she might continue her devoted labours among the people of Cheddar with less fatigue to herself.

In a time of great distress, whilst endeavouring to

obtain relief for the starving manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire, he also wrote to Hannah More, "I send you half a bank note for £50. I beg you, besides my ordinary debt, to regard me as your debtor for any sum you may call for, on account of the peculiar distress of the present times."

I am aware that while writing of William Wilberforce one must appear to use continually the language of panegyric; but the real fact is, that his was not only a very extraordinary, but a very lovely character, and one of which the faults were not likely to be put on record for posterity.

It has been said that he was too rapid in his movements, and that he took up too many subjects—that there was no rest about him; but if it were so in public life, in the domestic circle, all this was laid aside, and he was calm, loving, and quiet, anxious that his sons should confide in and make a friend of him;—possibly too little alive to error or tendency to error in them; and, as they grew up, perhaps too ready to yield to their opinions and judgment. His want of worldly wisdom was peculiarly manifested in a speculation into which he entered for the benefit of his eldest son, and which resulted in such loss of fortune to himself that in his old age he and his wife were glad to make their home in one of their sons' country-parsonages. But never was loss of that kind more admirably borne. He had never aimed at leaving his children rich: he had never hoarded either for them or for himself.

"I never intended to do more," he told his eldest

son, "than not to exceed my income; Providence having placed me in a situation in which my charities of various kinds were necessarily large. But, believe me, there is a special blessing on being liberal to the poor, and on the family of those who have been so; and I doubt not my children will fare better even in this world, for real happiness, than if I had been saving £20,000 or £30,000 of what has been given away."

To lose in his old age, however, so much property as not to be able comfortably to retain an establishment of his own, after having passed half a century in the service of others, would have been to most men exceedingly bitter; and a trial it must have been to Mr. Wilberforce; yet, as to the will of God, he cheerfully submitted; and in his later years he actually found this necessary seclusion in a country parsonage to be a very welcome rest.

In his old age he was still lively and even gay; social in his tastes, and always busy; quick, too, in his movements and animated in his manners; to the last also a great reader. To see his grandchildren springing up around him was one of the last of the many blessings which had crowned his life; and of recounting his mercies he was never wearied.

He always had been a lover of flowers; and even this taste remained up to the end as strong as in youth; so that his sons' gardens were a great source of enjoyment to him in these last quiet years.

His life closed in peace, after only a short illness, and at the age of seventy-four within a month, and but a few days after he had received the intelligence

that the fifty years' struggle was about to end, by the payment on the part of England of £20,000,000 as compensation to the slave-owners for their slaves; and that thus his country was to free herself from national crime and disgrace.

As soon as his actual departure was known, a letter was addressed by Lord Brougham, then Lord Chancellor, to the son with whom he was staying, and written on behalf of both Houses of Parliament. This letter conveyed an earnest request that his father, as a great benefactor of mankind, should be buried in Westminster Abbey. Of course his family felt no hesitation in acceding to this desire, gratifying as it was to their own feelings; though they desired to avoid all unnecessary pomp, as unbefitting the rank of a private gentleman.

When, however, the funeral reached Westminster Abbey on Saturday, August 5th, 1833, the procession was joined by all the members then attending the Houses of Parliament. "Public business was suspended; the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord Chancellor, one prince of the blood, with others of the highest rank, took their places as pall-bearers beside the bier. It was followed by his sons, his relations, and immediate friends. The Prebendary then in residence, one of his few surviving college friends, met it at the Minster-gate with the Church's funeral office; and whilst the vaulted roof gave back the anthem, his body was laid in the north transept, close to the tombs of Pitt, and Fox, and Canning."

The Abbey was thronged with numbers of men,

of all classes; and a subscription was immediately opened amongst his friends to place his statue in the Abbey.

But so numerous were the tokens of respect and heartfelt mourning, that it would be vain to try to recount them all. A happy and prosperous life had thus peacefully and honourably ended, and one of which it might truly be said "that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES SIMEON.

1759—1836.

IT was just one month after the birth of him whose life and labours formed the subject of the last chapter, that Charles Simeon, destined to be so great a power in Cambridge, first saw the light. Coming into the world nearly at the same time, and both of gentle birth, these two servants of God, who each exercised so great an influence in the Church and in the land, were, as we shall see, in one at least of the great works which they took in hand, labourers together; and, moreover, their lives covered nearly the same space of time; for Simeon only outlived Wilberforce by about three years.

He was the fourth and youngest son of Richard Simeon, Esq., of Reading. His mother, who was also of what is called a good family, could number among her ancestors two Archbishops of York. She must have died while he was still in childhood, as

her name does not appear in the scanty annals of his early days.

And, for lack of materials, we cannot linger long over those days. A very few lines will tell all that is known of them.

While still very young he was sent to Eton, and in due course admitted on the foundation. There he gained some reputation for those qualities which distinguished him through life, being energetic and vigorous in all that he did; and, as has been the case with some other distinguished men, very fond of boyish sports, especially such as required strength and activity. He was, besides, a bold and dextrous horseman, and a good judge of the merits of a horse. In fact, wherever any trial of speed or skill, or any feats of strength were going on, there Charles Simeon was pretty sure to be found. He left a reputation for such tastes behind him, and was remembered for them years after he left school. For instance, Dr. Goodall, a former schoolfellow, but afterwards Provost of Eton, once jocularly remarked to him in his old age, "I much doubt if you could now snuff a candle with your feet, or jump over half a dozen chairs in succession!"

But it is also known, from his own words, that at Eton he was exposed to scenes of temptation of which he afterwards spoke with the greatest horror; and that with reference to his life there, he never could look back upon it without the deepest shame and sorrow; although there is no evidence that he ever fell into any open crime or vice; but, on the contrary

his conduct as a school-boy was what would generally at that time have been described as pretty regular and correct. Whether he was a favourite at school or not, we do not know. Perhaps not, as he is said to have had some failings generally and naturally disliked by boys. He was peculiar in his manner, over-particular in his dress, somewhat vain and self-important; and withal hasty and inclined to be irritable.

Moreover, through all those years he was thoughtless and ungodly; and in his autobiography he only tells of one occasion when serious thoughts for a while prevailed; and that was on one of the fast-days for the American war; when he was arrested by the thought that the whole nation was uniting in prayer; and felt that if there were one who more than another had displeased God, it was he himself. So impressed was he then, that at once he put on a plainer dress, ate only one hard egg, and devoted the whole day to prayer; and all this so undisguisedly that the cry of "hypocrite" soon rang in his ears. His school-fellows set upon him, and by their upbraidings they quickly succeeded in reducing him to his old state of sinful indifference.

In his nineteenth year he gained a scholarship at King's College, Cambridge, just about the time when Wilberforce was admitted as fellow-commoner of St. John's; and on the 29th of January, 1779, he went into residence, little dreaming of the change that was before him.

It was only three days after his entrance on

college life, that he was startled by the information that in about three weeks' time he would be expected to attend the Lord's Supper—a most evil compulsion truly, and one that must have wrought much harm to many a youth. But in this case, He who knows how to bring good out of evil, Himself took this message, and sent it like an arrow straight home to Simeon's heart.

"What!" said he, "*must* I attend?" "On being informed that I *must*, the thought rushed into my mind, that Satan himself was as fit to attend as I, and that if I must attend, I must prepare for my attendance there. Without a moment's loss of time I bought the old "Whole Duty of Man,"—the only religious book I had ever heard of, and began to read it with great diligence, at the same time calling my ways to remembrance, and crying to God for mercy; and so earnest was I in these exercises, that within three weeks I made myself quite ill with reading, fasting, and prayer. *From that day to this, blessed, for ever blessed be my God, I have never ceased to regard the salvation of my soul as the one thing needful.*"

A seeker then in earnest, his next step was to buy some books on the Lord's Supper, which he was told he must receive again on Easter Sunday; and with unabated earnestness he recalled and mourned over the sins of his past life, feeling, as he said, so oppressed by them, that often he looked on the dogs with envy, and wished, if it were possible, that he could be blessed with their mortality, and they cursed with his immortality in his stead.

So for months he continued in great distress of mind, until, in the week before Easter, as he was reading in Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, he fell upon this expression, "that the Jews knew what they were doing when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering;" and the thought rushed into his mind, "What! may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an offering for me that I may lay my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one minute longer." Accordingly I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus, and on the Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong; and on the Sunday morning (Easter Day, April 4th) I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips,—

> 'Jesus Christ is risen to-day:
> Hallelujah! Hallelujah!'

From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's table in our chapel I had the sweetest access to God through my blessed Saviour. I remember, on that occasion, there being more bread consecrated than was sufficient, the clergyman gave some of us a piece more of it after the service, and on my putting it into my mouth I covered my face with my hand and prayed. The clergyman seeing it, smiled at me; but I thought that if he had felt such a load taken off from his soul as I did, and had been as sensible of his obligations to the Lord Jesus

Christ as I was, he would not deem my prayers and praises at all superfluous."

This is the story of the manner in which that mighty change passed on Charles Simeon which must pass on all who would see the kingdom of God; and it manifested itself at once in the speedy attempts which he made to impart to others the benefits which he had himself received.

The servants of the college were, sad to say, almost entirely prevented from going to church; so he told his own servant that if any of them chose to go to him on a Sunday evening, he would do his best to instruct them; of which offer several availed themselves.

In the long vacation, when he went home, he made a similar proposal to his father's servants, and was cheered by the co-operation of his elder brother; so that family prayer was established at once. He was going to be a clergyman, and such work, they perhaps thought, was quite proper for him.

Still all his society was in the world, for he had not yet one religious friend; and consequently he had to feel his way into the right path, and did not find it so quickly as otherwise he might have done.

For some time he continued to attend races and race-balls; and though without his old pleasure in them, he yet did so without seeing the evils connected with them. Once, indeed, he fell grievously through such like temptations; and, as he afterwards strongly felt, on that occasion he sinned against God and his own conscience by consenting to accompany an

acquaintance on a long Sunday excursion—a thing which he knew to be wrong. On that occasion he had a very narrow escape of his life. In the course of their long, hot ride, the young men stopped for refreshment at the house of a friend; and Simeon drank of some cool tankard which was offered him, and of the strength of which he was not aware, and took some wine after it; so that no sooner was he again on horseback than he became so utterly intoxicated and senseless, that had not the horse of its own accord turned in at an inn, where the people seeing his condition took him off, and where his friend on coming up found him, he would most likely have been thrown and killed.

"Have you heard that a gentleman of Reading (his own native town) has been killed by a fall from a horse while intoxicated?" said the landlady of an inn which he passed on his way home; and the startling question caused him to ask himself, in bitter remorse, "Why not me?"

It was a warning which he never forgot; and for the remainder of the vacation he was much solemnized and very diligent in the use of the means of grace. He attended the parish church constantly, and began to see much beauty in the English liturgy, afterwards so much prized by him.

With his mind full of serious thoughts, he naturally got the works of Hervey, then much read. These puzzled him by the manner in which the possession of assurance in order to salvation was insisted on; but he was led to see his way through this trouble,

and driven to rest on the Scriptures alone for authoritative teaching.

"He that will do My will shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," said the Lord Jesus. Simeon set himself with earnestness to do it in his daily life as an undergraduate; and in due time he proved the truth of the promise. He did not begin by seeking great things, but endeavoured first to be faithful in little ones; and, as opportunity offered, to do all the good he could. To conquer self and trample down his old selfishness, was henceforward his constant study He maintained with characteristic decision a daily struggle against his besetting faults and failings; of which this instance is recorded—that, being conscious of a disposition to extravagance, he thenceforward set himself to practise the most rigid economy, "allotting his small income so as to provide for even the minutest expense, and at the same time consecrating a stated part of it to the Lord, together with all that he could save out of that which he had reserved for his own use." Of this practice he reaped the benefit to the end of his life; both in always finding himself able to keep out of debt, and also in having the means to help many a good cause far more liberally than most persons would have supposed possible with the same means.

There is perhaps no test of character more true than the use to which money is put. How Charles Simeon stood that test will be seen further on. But here it must be mentioned that he tried another means of self-discipline, then much more in favour with religious

persons than now; namely, the keeping of a diary. In this matter, however, he did not show his usual decision, for he seldom persevered in it long together.

Perhaps, like many another, he always had a sort of feeling that this was an unnatural method, and one which leads to an unwholesome amount of introspection. Anyhow, he soon found out that he "had but little taste for diaries," although, happily for us, he never altogether abandoned the habit; for, had he done so we should have lost many interesting details of his life.

Having at that time not one single Christian friend, he was driven the more to the word of God and prayer. His faith was steadily strengthened by those means; and he grew rapidly in grace and in knowledge. Standing alone as he did, and seeing all around him many calling themselves Christians, who in no respect whatever differed from the world,—it is quite marvellous how firmly he stood, and how simply this once self-important young man tried to lead others to the Saviour whom he had found. Perhaps in his manner and gestures he still showed signs of his old disposition; but at the same time, had he not lived a very quiet and retired life, he must have become known to those one or two who even then sympathized with him; instead of which all through his college course he believed himself to stand quite alone in the university as to his religious views.

In vain had he attended at St. Mary's; in vain had he sought for a minister who should preach those

truths in which he delighted. At last, however, he lighted on a Mr. Atkinson; and finding that he came nearer to them than any one else, he began to attend regularly at his church; and after he had done so for some time he began to wonder that as he was the only gownsman who did so, no notice should be taken of him by this clergyman. A deep longing to find some one whose hand he could clasp with a consciousness of brotherhood, had indeed taken possession of his heart; and he sometimes had serious thoughts of putting an advertisement in the papers as soon as he was ordained, to the following effect:—"That a young clergyman who felt himself an undone sinner, and looked to the Lord Jesus alone for salvation, and desired to make that Saviour known to others, was persuaded that there must be some persons in the world whose views and feelings on this subject accorded with his own, though he had now lived three years without finding so much as one; and that if there were any minister of that description he would gladly become his curate, and serve him *gratis*."

At last, however, Mr. Atkinson did invite him to tea; and then the good man soon discovered that instead of being the proud young Pharisee which he had most gratuitously assumed him to be, Charles Simeon was the exact opposite. So he gave him the right hand of fellowship, and soon introduced him to Mr. John Venn, the son of the venerable patriarch of Huddersfield and Yelling, in whom he found a man after his own heart—a brother indeed, and a friend for life

Thenceforth there was an end of all isolation; for Mr. Venn speedily introduced him to his father, who was delighted to meet with so promising a young minister, and other good men soon found him out. Serious and enlightened young gownsmen were indeed so rare in those days that generally they quickly found themselves welcomed into Christian society.

But this is somewhat anticipating.

Charles Simeon was in holy orders before he first knew John Venn, having been ordained to Mr. Atkinson's curacy on Trinity Sunday, 1782, and having preached his first sermon in Bishop Latimer's old pulpit in St. Edward's. During the next long vacation he took entire charge of that church, and in less than seventeen Sundays he had quite filled it with hearers—"a thing unknown there for nearly a century."

"He is calculated for great usefulness," said old Mr. Venn, "and full of faith and love. . . . The day he was a substitute for Mr. Atkinson he began to visit from house to house; . . . and his evident regard for their good disarmed the people's prejudices. It is amazing what success he has met with!" So did old Venn rejoice over young Simeon.

But meantime his own family took alarm. "We aughed and looked serious by turns," wrote one brother, in answer to an earnest letter he had addressed to them. "To argue," he continued, "would be of no use"—he "only trusted that time would abate his zeal." Even "Richard," the invalid

"smiled," continued this brother;—the letter, however, was not bitter or unkind; and ere many months were over, the brother Richard, who was inclined to smile, after having become one with Charles in the faith, had departed this life, leaving behind him a good hope that he rested in the Lord. His death, at first, seemed likely to draw Charles Simeon from Cambridge, as it then seemed the path of duty for him to return home to keep his aged father company, Richard having been the only son at home. But a far different course of life was in God's providence ordained for him. Just as he was packing up for his journey, and all seemed settled, the living of Trinity Church, Cambridge, fell vacant. Charles Simeon had often as he passed that church said to himself, how much he would like that post in which to preach the gospel, though without a hope of ever being appointed its minister; and now, at his earnest request, his father immediately made application for it to the Bishop of Ely, the only bishop whom he had ever personally known; and strangely enough, considering that the applicant had only just attained his four-and-twentieth year, the bishop's reply was favourable. The income being only £50 per annum, it was perhaps not regarded as an important post. Nevertheless, though easily obtained, it was by no means easy to hold, as the parishioners had set their minds on another person, to whom, indeed, when Mr. Simeon saw their feeling, he would have resigned the church; but that the bishop positively

declared that, whoever had it, this Mr. Hammond should certainly not be the man ; because he did not approve of the manner in which the parishioners had interfered. They were determined, however, to do what they could ; and having the right to appoint to the lectureship, they gave that to Mr. Hammond, leaving Mr. Simeon only one sermon a week to preach, each Sunday. So for years did the matter stand, during which this desperate opposition lasted. It was an opposition which amounted to a persecution, and which it is difficult in these days at all to realize ; for the people almost universally put locks on their pew-doors, and they would neither attend themselves nor suffer others to do so, otherwise than by remaining in the aisles. Of course, if the churchwardens had been favourable, the affair might have been arranged ; but they were among his bitterest enemies, and for years the same persons remained in office.

As in the case of Wilberforce, Charles Simeon was early called to what was to be his life-work ; but, unlike him, he was called to it, not amidst welcomings and applause, but amidst opposition and persecution, against which it would have seemed to many to be useless to contend. In short, he was not a popular young man, like the member for Yorkshire, neither possessing naturally the same attractive manners, nor having anything like a county connexion to support him. It would seem, indeed, as if there were something peculiar in his address,—a certain something which often gave people a false impression of him ; else why, we might be disposed to ask, should John Venn

so long have noticed the "singular gownsman of King's" without seeking his acquaintance, whilst yet the religious society of Cambridge was so small?

Nevertheless, whatever outward defects there may have been at that time in Mr. Simeon, it is clear that those who valued the truth which he preached did not long know him before they learned to value him too; while many of his people became strongly attached to him.

During the opposition from his churchwardens and the troublesome party, which lasted for a tedious period of several years, the most striking fact of the case, perhaps, was, the waiting attitude of this young vicar, by nature so active, so vehement, and so eager to be at work! And if nothing else had done so, this wonderful patience of his would have shown very unmistakably the mighty change that had been wrought in his whole nature.

For years he was left to preach to empty pews, and to any who might be bold enough to get possession of the free-seats or of the benches, which he had put into the aisles and vacant spaces. Could anything be more irritating? And then, if he attempted to visit his parishioners, he found most of them usually too much embittered to receive him; and this in the vigour of his manhood, when he had strength for much work!

Calmly, however, he began to consider what he should do; and, in the first place, he decided to establish an evening lecture. But that attempt again, was of no avail; for on the first occasion the

churchwardens shut the doors against him; and one of them went away with the keys in his pocket. He got a smith to open them for the waiting crowd for that time; but remembering those words, "The servant of God must not strive," he thought it better not to persist. Yet, as multitudes were unable to enter the church every time he preached, he began to consider what plans he could adopt for meeting the people elsewhere, so as to prevent their deserting the Church of England altogether, and joining some other body of Christians.

The Lord ordereth the ways of all His servants; and without in this place attempting to exalt one church-system above another, yet this is very plain—that ecclesiastical systems, church and congregational ties, are among the means in His hand for keeping those safe who have been called into the fold. In the present day the oneness of the whole Church, and the vital importance of all fundamental truths, are so strongly felt by many true and earnest children of God, that the necessity of providing for those who are gathered out of the world is very much lost sight of. "It does not much matter where we go, so long as we hear the truth." This is often said and conceded in our day; but one day, perhaps, it will be found that a large number who seemed ready to take their stand on the side of God and His truth, have either gone back altogether, or practically become lost to the Church, through the want of this providing; and in speaking of the Church here the word is intended to bear its largest and widest sense.

When we look back now over the last century, we can see very clearly, as has been more than once already pointed out, that one of God's great purposes was to raise the Church of England, and make her a powerful agent in leavening the country. It could, then, be no mere accident, that when the very nurseries of the Church were to be acted upon, those chosen to do the work should be true and staunch to their own ecclesiastical system. John Wesley was a very decided Churchman; and though when it was a question of preaching the truth, or preaching the Church of England, he preferred the former, yet he did nothing to weaken the Established Church.

Charles Simeon was born later. He was not forced out of the Church at all; and all his life was spent in strengthening her stakes. With all his brotherly love to those who loved the Lord Jesus, wherever found, he yet so heartily approved our liturgy and the order of our Church, that it was to him, though a secondary, still a very important matter to keep his people within her fold.

To meet the difficulties which just then stood in the way, he therefore hired a room in the parish, where for some long time he met his flock for exposition, Christian communion, and prayer. After a time it was found too small, and he could only meet with a similar room outside his own boundaries. This step alarmed even his warmest friends, and they got his venerable friend, Mr. Venn, to remonstrate with him. But, on hearing all the circumstances of

the case, he simply said, "Go on, and God be with you." "Cambridge is going to be in a ferment," he wrote to Mr. Riland; "Mr. Simeon's ministry is likely to be blessed. We may, indeed, say, a great door is opened; for several gownsmen hear him." What follows is as true,—"and there are many adversaries." "He comes over to advise with me on every occasion. But the Wonderful Counsellor is with him, I advised him to visit a poor fellow in the gaol, who was spoken of in the papers as accessary in a murder. He answered, 'Oh, I have been there several times, and have good hopes that he will go from the gallows to glory.' Mr. Simeon's father, who used to delight in him, is all gall and bitterness. I should not wonder if he were to disinherit him. The Lord will be his portion if it be so, and he would be rich nevertheless. Such storms we have weathered; for what remains may we be ready, and at last be guided into the haven where we would be."

But though the persecutions in his parish continued, his father's estrangement was, happily, not of long duration. He was soon entirely reconciled to him; and they remained on as good terms as ever. A very interesting incident in the early part of his ministry occurred on the occasion of his going to Horsleydown to marry his eldest brother to the daughter of Mr. Thornton's partner; and it is worth mentioning here, on account of the effect which it produced on his mind.

The clergyman of Horsleydown having asked him to take his occasional duty for a week, that

he might be able to get away, he willingly consented. There was a funeral on the day of the wedding; and as he was waiting in the church-yard for its arrival, and reading the epitaphs, he came at last to one suitable to a real Christian:—

> "When from the dust of death I rise
> To claim my mansion in the skies,
> E'en then shall this be all my plea,—
> Jesus hath lived and died for me."

After reading a number of heathenish inscriptions these lines were refreshing to him; and turning to see if there were any one near to whom he might point them out, he perceived a young widow engaged in reading another epitaph; and at once addressing her, he soon learnt her mournful story,—an aged mother and two children to support, and her own health ruined in her efforts to maintain them; she thought a church-yard a suitable place for her!

After speaking the most suitable words that he could think of, Mr. Simeon took down her address; and calling on her as soon as he was able, he found the poor old mother very ill of asthma, the two children in bed, and the young woman sitting disconsolate. His sympathies were deeply touched, and seeing no way of affording effectual relief, he simply told them so, begging them to join with him in earnest prayer for help; so they fell on their knees, and were in a minute all bathed in tears. The next day, and the next, he went again to see them, each time wrestling with God for their relief, and

leaving a few verses for them to ponder over. And on the third occasion the poor young widow said, "Now, sir, I will tell you what the Lord has done for me." She then proceeded to relate how, when she had gone to a sister for help, and been sent away with nothing but reproaches, she had concluded that God had forsaken her, and was on her way to drown herself when Mr. Simeon first met with her. But now, she added, all was changed, she could look on God as her Friend, and Christ as her Saviour, and cast her care on Him. She had hitherto, she continued, worked on the Sabbath, but would do so no more, perceiving how little she could do without God's blessing.

The young clergyman's joy may be easily imagined. Of course he did not leave her to starve. By efforts made at once he got friends for her who looked well into the case; and so satisfactory did it prove, that many years after, he declared that had God granted him no other fruit, this would have been a recompense for a lifetime. "I went to town to marry my brother and Mr. Thelluson to two sisters," he wrote near the end of his life. "There were three grand feasts; and my relations secretly hoped that I might be drawn from God. But how did God interpose for me and work by me?"

To return to our narrative, however: finding himself shut out for the time from very much work in his own parish, Mr. Simeon used to go and preach wherever he was welcome, in all the towns and villages within a moderate distance; and thus he

soon had a sermon for almost every day in the week, and gained much practice in preaching. He frequently took the same subject on which he had addressed his flock at Cambridge; and by reconsidering it, and laying down fixed rules for himself, he gradually acquired perspicuity, force, and ease.

In after years, when he had attained some experience, he did good service to the Church by inviting a few young men to his rooms to assist them in the preparation of their sermons; and he would encourage them by saying, "When I began to write, at first I knew no more than a brute how to make a sermon; and after a year or so I gave up writing, and began to preach from notes. But I so stammered and stumbled that I felt this was worse than before, and so I began to take to a written sermon again. At last, however, the reading a sermon appeared so heavy and dull that I once more attempted to preach with notes, and determined, if I did not succeed, to give up preaching altogether."

It was on this last method that he worked for the rest of his life. He took the greatest pains, not only in the preparation, but also in the delivery of his sermons; for which, too, he used carefully to prepare, when written, by previously reading them over to himself, often at least half-a-dozen times before delivering them, and always by some laborious method; for he declared that he could expect no blessing on that which had cost him nothing. Very early in his ministry he took to the plan of first preaching, and then writing out what he had preached. This was in order to gain per-

spicuity. And at that time his style of delivery was extraordinarily earnest and impassioned. It was to the last, intensely fervent and impressive. It is true that now and then his gestures became almost grotesque, in his fearless attempt to illustrate his subject; but then it must be remembered that his *action* was never studied.

The effect of such preaching was, as might have been expected, very striking in two opposite ways. In the first place, the parish authorities, after two or three years' time, actually complained to the bishop that his sermons terrified and alarmed them; while, on the other hand, many persons became his attached disciples. In later years however, he accused himself of having been, as a young man, too impetuous; and used to say that if he had sought to *win* them as much as he did in after-life, he felt it would have been a wiser plan. In a few years Mr. Hammond resigned the lectureship, and Mr. Simeon believed that in the next election he had, if things had been managed fairly, the majority of votes. Yet he was not elected. Most of the pews also remained closed against him; and though he believed that this was done illegally, he nevertheless would not appeal to the law.

Still the once impetuous young man bided his time, and waited until his Master should open the door for him. "The servant of the Lord must not strive." "Many hundreds of times," he said, "has that one word tied my hands, when a concern for immortal souls would have prompted me to take off the locks."

A certain Mr. Housman, the first gownsman to

whom he believed himself to have been a means of lasting good, and who for three months after taking his degree was invited by him to share his own rooms, has described how it was that Mr. Simeon gained strength patiently to bear so much. "Never," he said, "did I see such consistency and reality of devotion, such warmth of piety, such zeal and love. I owe that great and holy man a debt which can never be cancelled." And he went on to relate how every morning, even though it were winter, Mr. Simeon would rise at four o'clock, and after lighting his fire, devote the first four hours of the day to prayer and the devotional study of the Scriptures, before he summoned his guest and his servant to what he called his family prayer. Mr. Simeon was to have power to cast out many, to say to the mountain of unbelief in Cambridge, "*Depart;*" and where such a work is set before a man it is generally found that that man's habits of devotion, and his powers of continuing in prayer, are quite above the conception of mankind in general.

In 1786 (having been only four years in orders) he preached for the first time in the University Church of St. Mary's, on which occasion his friends were delighted, and his bitterest foes struck dumb. There was a vast congregation, largely composed of gownsmen, some of whom had come on purpose to annoy; yet his first few sentences and his impressive manner soon riveted the attention of the people; and the assembly left the church hushed, subdued, and impressed. "Well," said one of the intended scoffers,

"Simeon is no fool, however." "Fool!" replied his companion, "did you ever hear such a sermon before?"

In fact, the opposition was beginning gradually to abate. "The Lord has at last been pleased to give me," he wrote soon after to a friend, "churchwardens who are favourable, and who know my desire to have an evening lecture. . . . If I could in everything commit my way unto the Lord, I should be the happiest creature under heaven; but self-will, impatience, unbelief, are sad plagues to me."

> "Talk not about myself,
> Speak evil of no man,"

he wrote in a conspicuous place in his memoranda; and again he said to Mr. Thornton, "Alas! how apt are young ministers (I speak feelingly) to be talking of that great letter I!"

But one of the best antidotes for that sort of temptation is often found in a strong impression of a great work to be done, and an impulse to attempt it. It may be some vehement desire after another person's good; a church's good, or a country's; something to be undertaken which will draw a man away from that great letter I. And here we are brought to the year 1788, when Mr. Simeon's attention was first drawn to one of the great objects for which he henceforth lived, the evangelization of India; that special enterprise which brought him and Wilberforce into contact, and the one which at once found a very warm place in his heart.

That for nearly a century we, as a people having

an interest and large possessions in India, had yet left that great country in utter ignorance of the gospel of Christ, now struck him, as we have seen it did Wilberforce, as an awful fact; and the subject, once brought under his notice, weighed on his mind. The appeal, indeed, came to Simeon direct from Calcutta, in the form of an address put forth by four persons who had already sketched out the plan of a Christian mission—the Rev. David Brown, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Grant, Mr. Udney, asked him to be their agent in England. This document he afterwards kept by him; and in 1830 he wrote that "it just showed how early God had enabled him to act for India, to provide for which had then been for forty-two years a principal object of his care."

In one of the letters that was preserved on the subject Mr. Brown writes of Mr. Wilberforce as one of their chief hopes. He spoke of two young men who had offered through Mr. Simeon to go out, and he said that Mr. Grant had promised £300 per annum for their support. The Governor-General, however, was not favourable; and so but little could then be done. But this very project evidently led the thoughts of Mr. Simeon and others to take a wider range; and it soon gave rise to those discussions which ended in the formation of the Church Missionary Society.

Meantime he slackened not his work at home. There was great distress in our own land that year, and when a subscription was raised in the university to enable the poor to get bread at half-price, Mr. Simeon, finding that the neighbouring villages were

left out, declared that the care of them should be his work; and he undertook to organize a plan of relief for twenty-four villages,—a scheme which he diligently carried out. A fair example this, of the manner in which, despite all that is said, home and foreign work generally go together, and are carried on by the same persons.

Two years later it was,—that is in 1790,—he really succeeded in establishing the evening lecture which he had long desired; and as an evening service was a novelty in a parish church in Cambridge, it at once gave a character for "Methodism" to the lectures. Young gownsmen would often go on purpose to annoy and disturb; and many behaved with as little propriety as if they had been in a play-house. The prejudiced authorities would not support him in his attempts to keep order; and at last Mr. Simeon had to take the matter into his own hands, and appoint persons to stand with wands in all the aisles, while he himself went down and stood at the north door immediately the sermon was ended, to be ready to apprehend any gownsman who should insult those who had been at church.

Frequently stones were thrown in at the windows, and in one instance a young man entered the church immediately after he had broken one; and when accused, confessed what he had done.

Disturbances had then risen to such a height that it was necessary to make an example; so Mr. Simeon appealed to the Vice-Chancellor, who, far beyond his most sanguine hopes, offered

to proceed with the culprit in any way that he thought fit.

Feeling that an example must be made unless his Sunday and Thursday lectures were to be discontinued, Mr. Simeon therefore adopted the plan of writing a form of apology to the congregation, which he compelled the young man to read aloud in church, and which, because he did not read it loud enough, Mr. S. afterwards himself read to the people. Great curiosity was excited on that occasion, the people all standing on forms or seats to hear it; but an awe was over all notwithstanding, of which Mr. Simeon afterwards made good use, by ascending the pulpit and preaching a solemn sermon from the words, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked." He was heard with the deepest attention; and for a long time his opposers were subdued and quieted.

It is evident that the vigour and daring of his own character were exactly the qualities required in these emergencies; that in this respect also he was the man for the place which he occupied; for indeed in such circumstances they stood him in good stead.

Another instance, still more striking, is given in the memoir.

Two young men went one day into his church in the most offensive manner possible, prepared to make a disturbance; and, as his habit was, he sternly fixed his eye upon them, and one was soon abashed; the other, however, simply withstood his gaze, and returned it with one of defiance. The very next day he sent for this latter, and warned him to beware of

attempting a repetition of his conduct; reminding him who it was that he so daringly defied, and quoting the words, "He that despiseth you despiseth Me," &c., and concluding by bidding him never to enter that church again unless he did so in a different spirit. To Mr. Simeon's great surprise the youth was again present on the very next Sunday, but with an altered countenance. He continued to attend until his eyes were opened, and he learnt to know for himself the Master whom his reprover served. Both of these young men became his attached friends; and one, the most daring of the two, very shortly, a preacher of the faith which so lately he had despised.

At this time Mr. Simeon held the office of Dean of Arts in his college; and at the expiration of a year he was made Dean of Divinity, and soon after elected to the highest post which as fellow he could fill—that of Vice-Provost; and in that capacity his vigorous and resolute maintenance of order greatly raised him in the opinion of university-men; who, however much they disliked his doctrine, had no manner of excuse for regarding him as weak or foolish.

"I took unto me two staves: and I called one Beauty, and the other Bands," said the prophet. If to the beauty of holiness men more commonly in our day would think of the bands of order and discipline, how much more satisfactory would be the results of many an evangelistic work!

Mr. Simeon had an organizing mind. He felt deeply the importance of binding and banding his

converts together. Very early in his ministry he formed his people into a religious society, and met them as their pastor in that way very frequently. After some time, when the excellent Thomas Thomason became his curate, he subdivided his society into six; but still later, when loss of voice and of health obliged him to be passive for some two or more years, these societies, under their respective stewards, had to meet for prayer and intercommunion without him. Thus the powers of many were drawn out, and they began to wish to do more than they had done; and some desired to take out licences as itinerant preachers.

This grieved Mr. Simeon exceedingly. Lay-preaching was then no recognised thing; and under the impression that they were getting lifted up with pride, he opposed the idea, and tried, though in vain, to reduce his people to order. The consequence was, that a dissentious spirit sprang up amongst them, to the very great grief of their pastor. It was as though he had set machinery at work over which he had lost the control; and he was much oppressed.

At this distance of time it is quite impossible to judge of this matter fairly. A bad spirit among the people appears to have certainly arisen; but it is doubtful, too, whether Mr. Simeon himself was not under a mistake. He was no sacradotalist; but perhaps he somewhat over-estimated the dignity of the pastoral office, and underrated the work of all those who are "called to be kings and priests unto God." Most strong men have, perhaps, though often

without suspecting the fact, the spirit of a "pope" in them; and therefore it is a merciful arrangement that many a well-meant design or organization fails, —painful though the failure may be to the organizer. But to return to the course of our narrative.

Mr. Simeon's three years of solitary training had long since given way to a very different state of things. No sooner had he made one religious friend than he speedily drew to him many who were powerfully attracted by his deep earnestness. One, indeed, Dean Milner, from what cause it is hard to say, for some time doubted his sincerity. But after long and close watching he was fully convinced, and in the end became one of the very large number of his attached admirers.

In the year 1796, when he had been in holy orders for fourteen years, having been introduced to Dr. W. Buchanan, of Edinburgh, he arranged to make a tour northwards with him. This Scotch journey was, as it proved, a very important epoch in his life; and many had reason to be thankful that he ever visited the north.

The two friends met in London, and first visited Windsor and Eton; after which they proceeded to Oxford, Bath, and Bristol, then on to the Mendip Hills, when, finding themselves within a mile of Cowslip Green, they resolved to visit the Misses More. "Hannah was not at home," he wrote in his diary, "and we saw only Sally and Patty. They seemed to be the very pictures of happiness; and they gave us much pleasing information. They have

not less than 1,100 children in different schools; and including sick and teachers, &c., not less than 1,800 persons under their care. The magistrates of Blagdon (a few miles from them) not long since entreated them to take the whole parish under their care; and soon, from a remarkably vicious and abandoned place, it is become sober and industrious.

Passing thence to Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, and Madeley, they called on old Mrs. Fletcher, the widow of the famous Fletcher of Madeley, and of her Mr. Simeon spoke as "that blessed mother in Israel," and remarked that though asthmatic and infirm, she was still "capable of much usefulness to the Church of God."

Stopping at a few other places (for men did not fly over the country then as we do in these days of steam), they reached Edinburgh on the 3rd of June, 1796, and did not return to Cambridge until the 30th of July. But it was not to visit the country that Mr. Simeon had gone northwards, nor for the sake of the bracing air. His object was to make the acquaintance of pious ministers, and to do as much work for his Master as he could accomplish in the time. Calling first on the secretary of the Christian Knowledge Society, he next went to hear Dr. Erskine at the Grey Friars; and in the afternoon he himself preached at the Canongate, and conducted the service after the usual manner,—a psalm, a general prayer, a sermon, a particular prayer for the spread of the gospel, for the king and royal family, the magistrates and ministers, those presiding in that

church, the sick, &c.,—a psalm, and the benediction; and not forgetting, according to instructions previously given him, to bow to the magistrates who sat before him, and who politely returned his bow. "Except when I preached in episcopal chapels, I officiated precisely as they do in the Kirk of Scotland," he wrote in his autobiography many years after this first visit, "and I did this upon principle. Presbyterianism is as much the established religion in North Britain as Episcopacy is in the south, there being no difference between them except in church government. As an Episcopalian, therefore, I preached in episcopal chapels; and as a member of the Established Church I preached in the Presbyterian churches. . . . I look upon it as an incontrovertible position, that where the king *must* attend, a clergyman *may* preach. . . . And I believe that many will bless God to all eternity that ever I did so. But I cannot help recording here, to the honour of the Church of England, that on all the three times that I have visited Scotland, and have attended almost entirely the Presbyterian churches, I have on my return to the use of our liturgy been perfectly astonished at the vast superiority of our mode of worship, and felt it an inestimable privilege that we possess a form of sound words so adapted in every respect to the wants and desires of all who would worship God in spirit and in truth."

Nevertheless Mr. Simeon so fully realized the communion of saints that he could thoroughly enjoy the intercourse which he thus gained with good men

in the north. He counted it one of his greatest blessings ever to have known Dr. Buchanan of Edinburgh; and he thankfully accepted invitations from Dr. Black, Dr. Erskine, Mr. Moody of Perth, Dr. Stewart, and other ministers. Wherever he preached he seems to have had crowded audiences, and to have been sought after by various noblemen and noble ladies; and he did not merely preach, but communicated with them also,—though he could not appreciate the long and closely-following services, nor the comfort to be found in them. On one occasion the service lasted until eight in the evening, —1,000 communicants, a fresh exhortation to each table, and a sermon to conclude! "They who could stay there from beginning to end with any profit to their souls must," he remarked, "be made of very different materials from me."

And truly these communion-seasons in Scotland must partake much more of the nature of fasts than of feasts. Profit, no doubt, there may be in them for those who can continue in prayer and in waiting on the Lord. They may be great seasons of self-dedication and of wrestling in prayer; yet from the simple memorial feast, the sacramental breaking of bread, how different!

But now to give one instance of spiritual good resulting from this evangelistic tour.

He was at Moulin on a sacrament-Sunday; the congregation was numerous, and the communicants nearly 1,000. This sounds astonishing to English ears; but it must be remembered that communion

seasons in Scotland happen but three or four times in the year, and that nearly every one then partakes. Mr. Simeon thus wrote of his view of the real state of religion among them :—" I expressed to them my fears respecting the formality which obtains among the people, and urged them to devote themselves truly to Jesus Christ. After that I partook with the third table. . . . In the evening Mr. Stewart (the minister) came up into my room ; and we had much and useful conversation about the ministry. He complained of unprofitableness, and was much affected during the conversation." " Mr. Stewart," he says elsewhere, " was a man in high repute, both for amiableness of manners and for learning ; but he was very defective in his views about the gospel, and in his experience of its power. When we were all retiring to go to bed I had him with me alone in my chamber, and spoke such things as occurred to my mind with a view to his spiritual good ; and it pleased God so to apply them to his heart that they were made effectual to the enlightening of his eyes, and bringing him into the marvellous light of the gospel of Christ. From that moment he changed the strain of his preaching, determining to know nothing among his people but Jesus Christ and Him crucified ; and God has now for these fifteen years made his instructions eminently useful for the conversion and salvation of many souls."

" Many," wrote Dr. Buchanan to Mr. Simeon after his return—" many, I trust, have cause to thank God for your visit to Scotland : " and the impression

which he had there made led to his visiting them twice again in after-years during the long vacations; when he was received in many circles almost as an apostle; and though this was a sort of extra work,—work by the way, as it were, the results were very great,—"I do not imagine," wrote Dr. Buchanan on the second occasion, "that any stranger ever carried with him from Edinburgh so large a portion of these good people's affection."

That he should thus preach in Presbyterian pulpits was no doubt thought a strange thing by many English friends; nevertheless it was not hindered by influences on this side the border. The opposition came from what was known as the "moderate party" in the church of Scotland, who strongly disapproved of the effects of his preaching. "His visits to Edinburgh," wrote one friend, "were always felt as a refreshment and useful stimulus by the good people there. The doctrine he preached and expounded to them was the same; but the manner and illustrations and the zeal and fervour of his ministrations, both in public and private, were very different; and were calculated to produce, and did produce, a great effect. I remember well his preaching a most striking sermon on ministerial duties and faithfulness, in which he introduced, with a view to illustration, the keeper of the lighthouse on Inch-Keith, the island situate in the middle of the Firth of Forth, between Mid-Lothian and Fife. He supposed the keeper to have let the light go out, and that in consequence the coast was strewed with wrecks, and with dead and

mangled bodies; and that the wailings of widows and orphans were everywhere heard. He supposed the delinquent brought out for examination before a full court and assembled people; and at last the answer to be given by him that he was 'asleep.' 'Asleep!' The way in which he made this 'asleep' burst on the ears of his audience, who were hanging in perfect stillness on his lips, contrasting the cause with the effects, I remember to this day."

But the moderate party did not approve of such a stir; and at the next synod they determined to appeal to the General Assembly, and to obtain a decree that no one who had not been ordained by the Presbytery should officiate in their pulpits.

Nevertheless it was this unusual earnestness that made Charles Simeon what he was, a great leader. His whole heart was not only in his work, but manifestly in it; and the preaching of the gospel was to him a life study; for it appeared to him no such easy matter as in our days many are inclined to think it. He studied, he laboured, he considered how he could do it in the best and most intelligible and impressive way; and when the attention that he gained, and the effects that resulted, caused him to feel that he knew a little about it, then, as we have already seen, he began to gather young men round him to give them the result of his own experience.

As years rolled on, all opposition gradually subsided; and he became accustomed, Sunday by Sunday, to see his church thronged by gownsmen in every corner, and could not doubt his influence.

After he had been ten years in the ministry, and was in the position of a noted preacher, it seemed therefore to him to be no presumption to think of publishing on the great subject. He revised Claude's Essay on Preaching, a work which had just then fallen into his hands, and the rules laid down in which he had long unwittingly in great part adopted. The author of this essay was the Rev. John Claude, a minister of the reformed faith in France, but compelled by persecution to flee to the Hague, where he ended his days; and his book was much valued.

To this Mr. Simeon added one hundred skeleton sermons of his own, exemplifying Claude's idea; and "this appendix of skeletons was the germ of that great work which ultimately extended to twenty-one volumes, and was emphatically one of the works of his life;" but the larger volumes did not come out until the opening of the new century.

The book, of course, sold chiefly among the clergy; yet the demand for it led him on to reprint and to enlarge, until 2,536 skéletons were produced, and it had attained to the above-mentioned size. That large edition was printed on the application of a publisher, and not until about the year 1830. That it should have been called for and freely sold at the price of ten guineas a copy, shows how large and how steady had been the demand for his works during the space of about thirty-five years, and it was itself a fact unparalleled in the history of literature.

The production of this collection was nearly the last act of a most useful and a most wonderful life.

By a remarkable effort of a powerful printing press, keeping thirty-two men constantly at work, the whole book was accomplished in sixteen months, and the set of twenty-one volumes was presented to King William IV. at a private audience in June, 1833, and in 1836 Charles Simeon was laid upon his death-bed.

From the year 1796, when the rapid sale of a sermon entitled "The Gospel Message," accompanied by four skeletons on the same text, started the idea, the subject was apparently seldom absent from his thoughts, and continual allusions to it are found in letters to his friends. Speaking of that sermon he wrote to a clerical brother, "You will easily perceive that it has cost me some trouble: but though I am more lazy and indolent than I dare express to any of my fellow-creatures, I have, through mercy, some little desire to work while it is day. I want very much to know what my friends would have me to do." In this way he constantly asked advice; and it was really as a duty laid on him, and that he could not avoid, that he undertook the work.

About the same date in which he had begun this work, Mr. Simeon's attention was again drawn to the matter of Indian missions. At a clerical meeting held at Mr. Pugh's in Rauceby, Lincolnshire, it had been stated that a Mr. Jane had left £4,000 to be expended at Mr. Pugh's discretion in any scheme for the promotion of true religion. It was proposed by some to devote this sum to the origination of Christian missions. Various other clerical societies were requested to take the subject into consideration,

and by Mr. Simeon, who made notes for and against, the matter was brought before the Eclectic Society. There were seventeen members present, most of whom made objections; but Thomas Scott advocated it, and Basil Woodd wrote in the notes of the meeting, "This conversation proved the foundation of the Church Missionary Society."

On the 18th of March, 1799, another meeting of the Eclectic was held, which Mr. J. Venn opened by insisting on the duty of doing something for the heathen. Mr. Charles Grant urged the foundation of a missionary seminary, Mr. Pratt seconded him, and then Mr. Simeon spoke, putting forward distinct propositions and urging immediate action.

The result was a general consent that a society should be formed, a prospectus of the scheme proposed, and the whole plan then laid before the bishops. After one more meeting to arrange all this, a public assembly was called to meet on April 12th at the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldersgate Street, "For the purpose of instituting a society amongst the members of the Established Church for sending missionaries among the heathen." There the Rev. J. Venn was in the chair, and sixteen clergymen and nine laymen were present. It was not as large a meeting as perhaps was hoped; yet those good men were not discouraged, and "The Society for Missions to Africa and the East" was there formed.

It was indeed like the little grain of mustard seed in the Lord's parable; but in the past eighty years how has that seed grown into a mighty tree, which

is still extending both its roots and its branches all over the world.

Not long after the above-mentioned meeting, Charles Simeon dined at Henry Thornton's, and there, first seems to have met William Wilberforce, who was struck with admiration at his love and zeal.

In 1802, Henry Martyn, a St. John's man, on the eve of becoming senior wrangler and of entering the ministry, began, through some remark of Mr. Simeon's, whose preaching had deeply impressed him, to entertain thoughts of missionary work. He soon afterwards became his curate, and a strong bond of Christian love was formed between them. Mr. Simeon must indeed have been happy with two such curates as Mr. Thomason and Mr. Martyn; and the ties thus formed between him and these two young men were destined to draw his heart out more and more towards India, where eventually they both labouerd.

In the year 1805 Mr. Martyn obtained a chaplaincy and sailed for India, where three years later Mr. Thomason followed him; and the warm heart of their old rector prompted frequent correspondence. It will be seen in the next chapter what the former of these two young men, not only attempted, but achieved for the spiritual welfare of that land, and we therefore may pass over the subject here.

Nevertheless, had not new work come before him, Mr. Simeon might have suffered much from the blank caused by their departure and the loss of their help. But much and important work was then opening before the Church.

About the year 1810 some young men in the university determined to set on foot an association of the Bible Society in Cambridge; and full of ardour, they endeavoured to interest all sorts of persons. "A great alarm," says Mr. Simeon, "was excited through the university; and every person without exception threw cold water upon it, from this principle, that if they were suffered to proceed in this way about the Bible, they would soon do the same about politics." At length, however, the young men who would submit to no one else, bowed with perfect willingness to him, and let him draw a line around them which they were not to pass. They drew back, and committed everything to their seniors, on which several prominent men, amongst whom was Charles Simeon, stood forward.

But there were very many opposers. It was so great a struggle, indeed, that they almost wished they had not moved in the matter, when news came that the Duke of Gloucester, who was Chancellor of the University, would take the chair. This was through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce. Then other great names came in, the Earl of Bristol, the Dukes of Bedford and of Rutland, as also the Bishop of Bristol. Dr. Steinkopff, Mr. Owen, Professor Farish, Dr. Clarke, and Dr. Milner spoke, and there was great excitement. After all, the meeting was considered a great triumph.

But just about that time a new bishop succeeded to the see of Ely, and at the end of twenty years' peace, complaints were again carried up to the

bishop against Mr. Simeon's evening lectures. However it was not then as in bygone days; for on this occasion a unanimous meeting of the Heads of Colleges assembled ostensibly for another purpose, all of whom so entirely took his part, that the cloud which threatened to curtail his ministry passed away.

After that the cause of God's ancient people much engrossed his mind. The new chapel for the Jews at Bethnal Green was then being built; and in this matter also, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Simeon were workers together. Indeed, it was about that time that the London Jews' Society, which had been on a common basis, was given over to the Church of England; and very great exertions were made to increase its usefulness.

From that period, Mr. Simeon became so actively engaged in the cause of Israel, that he very soon undertook a journey to the Continent in order to search out the condition of the scattered Jewish communities, and spread the Hebrew Testament among them. He and his companions also worked for the amelioration of their social condition; and their efforts were probably the means of effecting very great changes for the better.

In 1818, also, he and Mr. Marsh made another tour for the Jewish cause throughout England; when in five weeks they collected for the society the sum of eight hundred guineas. In 1821 an association of the London Jews' Society was formed in Cambridge.

And yet another great work about the same time

came before him; and this he took up in some sense as a work peculiar to himself, though Mr. John Thornton had pointed to him the way, and shown him a great channel of doing good. He had seen how very difficult it then was to place an evangelical man in any important post in the Church; and how any such had to be content with curacies or lectureships, or any small charge that they could obtain. Yet advowsons of livings, in large and important places, were, from time to time, offered for sale. Mr. Thornton had purchased some, and placed them at the disposal of suitable trustees at his death; and Mr. Simeon now resolved to follow in his steps. One unknown person had bequeathed him £800. His brother Edward left him £15,000, which he dedicated to the Lord's service and that of the poor, for whom his brother had done much in his life-time. He scarcely increased his own expenditure at all, but left it on record that he simply accepted this large sum as a steward for his deceased brother; lest in after-years many might ask why he had not given up his fellowship.

Not for twice that sum would he have done that; seeing that in his fellowship, in his Church, and with his young men, he still found his chief work. He had refused a good living on that ground; and now he took this large legacy solely to use for others. His former private charities had ever been free and liberal, and his sympathies with every good work were too real not to draw considerably from his own resources; but the great object which he henceforward made a

chief aim was to do as John Thornton had done, and purchase livings, which should be vested in evangelical trustees. "Having no family," he wrote to a friend, "and my brother's family being in comfortable circumstances, . . . and having suffered a legacy to be left to me for the express purpose of doing good, I have these many years determined to devote a great part of the principal and all the interest to the service of our common Lord;" after which he proceeded to specify the purchase of livings as the particular work which he had taken on himself.

In this work he met with much help from friends. "Lord P. offers £4,000, and Dr. Kilvington £10,000 stock," he continued. "I have already bought several, and am in treaty for two more. . . . . My plan is first to leap into the mire, and then say to my friends, 'If you choose to give me a helping hand I will take a few more leaps.'" In this way, at the close of Mr. Simeon's life, some fifty or sixty churches were placed at the disposal of his trustees; and sixty-four now stand as such in the Clergy List. Meantime he himself practised the greatest economy; and his accounts were kept with the utmost strictness.

In order to prevent all possibility of inaccuracy, he not only kept his account-books by doubleentry, but had them regularly balanced by an experienced person three times a year.

An amusing anecdote is told of his extreme particularity in this.

On one occasion an error of one penny was detected. He was extremely annoyed; and after days

of fruitless search to discover the mistake, he insisted on the accountant taking away with him the books, and never remitting his efforts till he had detected the error. "There! make it out for me, cost what it will! I'll not have my books wrong, even by a penny! Make it out for me you shall; and I'll give you twenty pounds!" After much labour the mistake was found out; Mr. Simeon was delighted, and immediately gave the promised cheque.

Meantime he was training such men as he would wish to see in the livings that he was purchasing; by means of his Sunday evening lectures, and his weekly open tea-party for undergraduates, which were for years largely attended.

He also set on foot a third clerical-education society; intended to provide the means to enable pious youths who personally had them not, to go up to the universities.

Few men ever had so many "irons in the fire;" and yet he spoke of himself, and it may be very truly, as naturally an indolent person. It was by the grace of God that Charles Simeon became what he was. His was no naturally perfect character; nor were his failings altogether of a description that he could keep to himself. A disposition to indolence in him would perhaps have been credited by few who saw him "in labours so abundant;" but his natural irritability would break out from time to time, and more especially when suffering, as he occasionally did, from an attack of gout. But, happily, he was not only fully sensible of this infirmity, but ever ready to

confess it. His outbreaks would sometimes provoke a smile, from the nature of the incidents which called them forth.

"You know how particular our friend was about stirring the fire," wrote one who knew him, "and there was another and greater infirmity of his, of speaking at times as if he was very angry about mere trifles. We were one day sitting at dinner at Mr. Hankinson's, when a servant behind him stirred the fire in a manner so unscientific, that Mr. S. turned round and hit the man a thump on the back to stay his proceedings. When he was leaving me on horse-back, after the same visit, my servant had put the wrong bridle on his horse. He was in a hurry to be gone; and his temper broke out so violently that I ventured to give him a little humorous castigation. His cloak-bag was to follow him by coach; so I feigned a letter in my servant's name, saying how high his character stood in the kitchen, but that they could not understand how a gentleman who preached and prayed so well should be in such passions about nothing, and wear no bridle on his tongue. This I signed 'John Softly;' and the hoax so far succeeded that at first he scarcely perceived it; but it afterwards produced two very characteristic notes, the first of which was signed "Charles Proud and Irritable;" and the second, plainly addressing his friendly monitor, was signed by his own name, in which he frankly confessed and mourned over this failing, and returned many thanks for the reproof in the most genuine and hearty manner."

Mr. Simeon lived in times that seemed full of promise. The seed was being sown broadcast, and as yet the enemy had not sown all the tares which have since borne such bitter fruit. The life was coming back to many a half-dead church; and the everlasting gospel was about to be preached throughout the world, while as yet the adversary had not rallied his forces. All, therefore, seemed full of promise. "In truth," wrote Mr. Simeon in 1826, "the whole world seems to have received somewhat of a new impulse, and glorious times are fast approaching. The sun and the moon are scarcely more different from each other, than Cambridge is from what it was when I was first minister of Trinity Church; and the same change has taken place through almost the whole land." And again, "I remember the time when I was quite surprised that a Fellow of my own College ventured to walk with me for a quarter of an hour on the grass-plat before Clare Hall; and for many years I was a man wondered at, by reason of the paucity of those who showed any regard for true religion. But now, on my open days, when I receive visitors to tea, frequently more than forty (all without invitation) come." Again, "In the month of April I was proposed as a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and as it was apprehended that I might be blackballed (for some have been, who were far less notorious than myself), there went a host of bishops and other dignitaries, about 90 or 100, to vote me in with a high hand." . . . . Last week three bishops did me

the honour of visiting me. . . . In former years I should have as soon expected a visit from three crowned heads!"

The following graphic account of Mr. Simeon's weekly tea parties appeared in a number of the *Christian Ladies' Magazine*:—

"I must bring you, then, into Mr. Simeon's audience-chamber, where my mind's eye sees him seated on a high chair at the right-hand side of the fire-place. Before him are the benches, arranged for the occasion, occupied by his visitors; even the window-recesses are furnished with seats, which, however, are usually filled the last, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of our venerated friend, somewhat humorously expressed, that he has taken special pains to make the windows air-tight, and has even put the artist's skill to the test with a lighted candle." 'I shall be very glad,' he would say, 'to catch from you any cold that you may catch at my windows.'

"At the entry of each gownsman he would advance towards the opening door with all that suavity and politeness which you know he possessed in a remarkable degree, and would cordially tender his hand, smiling and bowing with the accomplished manners of a courtier. I assure you we deemed it no small honour to have had a hearty shake of the hand and a kind expression of the looks of that good old man.

"If any stranger was introduced to him at these meetings, he would forthwith produce his little pocket-book, and enter, with due ceremony, the name

of his new acquaintance, taking care to inquire his college, and such other matters as he deemed worthy of being registered. Sometimes, too, he would comment, in his own way, upon the name he was writing, or make some passing quaint remark, which would put us all into a good humour.

"As soon as the ceremony of introduction was concluded, Mr. Simeon would take possession of his accustomed elevated seat, and would commence the business of the evening. I see him even now, with his hands folded upon his knees, his head turned a little to one side, his visage solemn and composed, and his whole deportment such as to command attention and respect. After a pause he would encourage us to propose our doubts, addressing us in slow, and soft, and measured accents:—'Now, if you have any question to ask, I shall be happy to hear it, and to give what assistance I can.' Presently one, and then another, would venture with his interrogatories, each being emboldened by the preceding inquirer, till our backwardness and reserve were entirely removed. In the meantime two waiters would be handing the tea to the company; a part of the entertainment which the most of us could well have dispensed with, as it somewhat interrupted the evening's proceedings; but it was most kindly provided by our dear friend, who was always very considerate of our comfort and ease."

Then follows an account of the conversation that took place and the questions asked, too long to be inserted here. "It was," says the writer, "the most

interesting and solemn Friday evening meeting that I ever attended. I never saw the holy man of God more full of the spirit of his Master. His words were distilled as honey from his lips; at least, they were very sweet to *my* taste. . . . On that memorable evening such a deep sense of his own unworthiness rested upon his soul, that he was low in self-abasement before God. All his language seemed to be, 'Lord, I am vile,' and his very looks spake the same."

The above extract may be followed by a few lines from the pen of the late J. J. Gurney.

"Simeon has the warm and eager manners of a foreigner, with an English heart beneath them. He is full of love towards all who love his Master, and a faithful, sympathizing friend to those who have the privilege of sharing in his more intimate affections. To all around him, whether religious or worldly, he is kind and courteous; and by this means, as well as by the weight of his character, he has gradually won a popularity at Cambridge which now seems to triumph over all prejudice and persecution. He is upwards of seventy years of age, but his eye is not dim, his joints not stiffened, his intellect not obscured. His mind, lips, eyes, and hands move along together in unison; and singularly pliable and rapid is he, both in his mental and bodily movements, quick to utter what he feels, and to act what he utters. His conversation abounds in illustrations, and while all his thoughts and words run in the channel of religion, he clothes them with brightness

and entertainment; and men and women, and even children, are constrained to listen. It is not, however, the ear alone which he engages, while his conversation penetrates that organ even when uttered in its lowest key—so distinct are his whispers. The eye is immoveably fixed on his countenance, which presents an object of vision peculiarly grotesque and versatile, and at the same time affecting. Nor are his hands unwatched by the observer, while they beat time to the ever-varying emotions of his mind."

"I cannot but hope that it may please God to suffer you, during a long protracted autumn," wrote Mr. Wilberforce on the jubilee of his ministry at Cambridge, "to enjoy in the university, where such an exhibition has rarely been vouchsafed, a sort of earthly harvest-home."

But the autumn season endured only during the space of four years more. In his seventy-eighth year Charles Simeon was called to his rest, after an illness of barely two months from the time when he preached his last sermon with all his wonted energy and vigour. In high health and strength he had gone, two days after preaching that sermon, to pay his respects to the bishop at Ely; a visit which as one of the oldest of the clergy he had been very anxious to make; and he was seized with a rheumatic illness on his return.

It had been his great desire to die in harness, and to retain such possession of his faculties as to enable him to show how a Christian can die; and not only were those two wishes granted, but he also lived to

have his last desire gratified in the appointment of his successor. It is to this successor, his dear friend, the Rev. W. Carus, that we are indebted for his most interesting biography, of which not the least instructive and edifying part is the narrative of his last illness. "There was a remarkable and rapid maturing," says he, "of all the finer parts of his character from the commencement of this illness, and a corresponding diminution, and ultimately a disappearance of those symptoms of haste and irritability which sometimes were visible in his days of health and vigour. He seemed now to breathe entirely an atmosphere of peace and love; and enjoying such a sense of God's pardoning love himself, he longed to manifest an affectionate and forgiving spirit to all around."

His sufferings were often very acute, and his nights restless and wakeful. Yet he was grieved to give the least trouble, particularly to any sitting up with him at night. "I shall never sleep," he once said, "until I fall asleep in the arms of Jesus Christ. I seem to have nothing to do but to wait; there is now nothing but peace, the sweetest peace." But with that there was the deepest humility. "Don't make a scene; there is nothing that I more abhor than a death-bed scene." And mistaking something that his servant had said, for the language of praise, he begged, "If anything laudatory be said of me, I entreat from my inmost soul that it may not be repeated to me. Let me go to heaven as the vilest sinner in the universe. So far as respects myself let me not know that there is such a person as Charles Simeon. Satan himself

could not be a greater curse to me than the person who would dare to breathe a word commendatory of me, or anything I have done."

A private funeral, according to his wish, in his own King's College Chapel, was aimed at ; and only his personal friends were informed of the day ; nevertheless, heads of colleges and professors, representing all the colleges, and crowds of gownsmen, together with his own congregation from Trinity Church, all in deep mourning, thronged around the vault where the Luther of Cambridge was laid to his rest ; while although it was market-day, yet in all the principal parts of the town the shops were closed, and, what was a very unusual mark of respect, the college lectures were suspended.

"Turning to my old recollections," said one who described the funeral scene, "I could scarcely have believed it possible that Charles Simeon could be thus honoured at his death."

But "them that honour Me I will honour," saith the Lord of hosts.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY MARTYN.

1781—1812.

"The one heroic name which adorns the annals of the English Church from the days of Elizabeth to our own."—*Sir James Stephen.*

AN allusion has been made to Henry Martyn in the preceding chapter; and it may be interesting now to take up the story of his short but remarkable career; for he was really one of the principal pioneers in the great field of our Indian missions.

For his origin we have to go some steps lower in the social scale than we have hitherto done, his father having begun life as a working miner in the mines of Gwenap, though by the time of his son Henry's birth he had so raised himself as to be chief clerk in the office of Mr. Daniel, merchant, of Truro, where on the 18th of February, 1781, this, his third surviving child was born.

In the mine in which Mr. John Martyn worked, the custom was to work four hours and rest four hours: those hours of rest he had employed in study, and thus he had acquired so complete a knowledge

of arithmetic, together with some acquaintance with mathematics, that he became fitted for some such work; and so in time he rose into a position of more than competence.

His family was large, but very delicate, most of them dying young, while those who survived, namely, two sons and two daughters, all inherited their mother's consumptive tendency, and, as it appears, ere middle age, they had all followed her to the tomb.

From his infancy Henry was considered to be a promising child, and great hopes were conceived of him. So when, in his eighth year, he was placed in the grammar school of Truro, of which the master was Dr. Cornelius Cardew, he was soon discovered to be, in spite of a little idleness, sufficiently quick-witted to get on very well. And yet but few could discover that he gave much time to learn his lessons, which he always seemed to know by a sort of intuition.

His master, observing his character, put him to sit in class by an older boy—K., who not only helped him in his studies, but constituted himself his protector in the play-ground, where, owing to his not often joining in boyish sports, he was rather unpopular, and consequently met with a good deal of bullying; for he appears to have had no taste for rough games, from which he generally kept aloof. This may seem strange, as he was a lively, cheerful boy; but the disinclination probably arose from a want of physical power. Little Harry, as he was then called, would therefore have had but a sorry time of it, had not his friend stood by him and defended him.

As he grew older he made good progress in his classical studies; and in his fifteenth year he was sent by his father to compete for a vacant scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and he passed his examination well, though another and perhaps older youth was the successful candidate.

In after-life he esteemed this a fortunate failure, on account of the profligate character of the acquaintances with whom he had there fallen in; and the result was, that in the end, when the proper time came, he followed his good friend K. to Cambridge, and entering at St. John's College in 1797, at once set himself to learn Euclid by heart! He did this with a view to becoming eventually senior wrangler; and as may easily be perceived, from his taking this method, he had previously no acquaintance with the subject. His studies at Dr. Cardew's, in fact, had been classical; and solely classical, perhaps, had he gone to Oxford, they would have remained; but he was ambitious, and wished to take up whatever would bring him the most honour. He seems also to have thought that he could do anything he chose without much trouble, as he did not begin to study until he went up to college, but spent all the previous vacation in shooting, reading books of travels, and Lord Chesterfield's letters.

It was therefore a wholesome check that in the first two college examinations he came out only second instead of first.

Happily for him there were two people ever on the watch to remind him that the honours of this

world are not all that is to be desired. His friend K. was a pious young man; and seeing the spirit in which he was working, he warned him that he ought not to study only for the praise of men, but rather for the glory of God.

His youngest sister, also, was a very earnest Christian; and when he went home for his vacation she talked to him in the same strain; and Henry, who was of an affectionate temper, seemed always to have allowed both sister and friend to say just what they would, without taking offence; and indeed in words he generally agreed with them. But at that time his heart was thoroughly in the world, and his mind full of ambitious thoughts; so, for the time being, their efforts produced no effect on him. He gave his sister a promise that he would read his Bible; but Isaac Newton filled all his thoughts. That Christmas he was first in the examination; and his father, whom he earnestly desired to please, was very much delighted; but though at that time in high health and spirits, he did not live to witness any other of his son's triumphs. The very next month Henry received through his brother the sudden and unlooked-for intelligence of his decease; and it came on him as a crushing blow.

Yet for him the blow proved to be full of mercy; for this sad event was the first thing that arrested him in the midst of his ambitious and worldly career. The death of the father was, instrumentally, the life of the son.

K., ever on the watch, took advantage of his

evident depression to urge him to make that a solemn season of reflection; and this time Henry really took his advice. Serious reflections, indeed, then forced themselves upon him. That very same night he began at least to use a form of prayer; and being in thoughtful mood, he was struck when next at college chapel with the joyful expressions in the Magnificat regarding the coming of Christ. Soon afterwards his friend lent him Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," which he read; and though he did not like what he called its gloomy opening, yet the study of it no doubt cherished the good work which, as the event proved, was even then begun in his heart.

The two friends talked it over; and Henry's serious feelings did not pass away. From about that time also he began to attend Mr. Simeon's ministry; which was of the greatest use to him. Nor was it long before he wrote to his sister tidings of himself which must have given her joy indeed.

"With respect to the dealings of the Almighty with me," he said in one letter, "you have heard in general the chief of my account; as I am brought to a sense of things gradually, there is nothing peculiarly striking in it to particularize. After the death of our father you know I was extremely low-spirited; and, like most other people, began to consider seriously that invisible world to which he was gone, and to which I must one day go. Yet I still read the Bible unenlightened, and said a prayer or two rather through terror of a superior power than from any other cause. Soon, however, I began to attend more

diligently to the words of our Saviour in the New Testament, and to devour them with delight. When the offers of mercy and forgiveness were made so freely, I supplicated to be made partaker of the covenant of grace, with eagerness and hope; thanks to the ever-blessed Trinity for not leaving me without comfort. Throughout the whole, however, even when the light of divine truth was beginning to break upon my mind, I was not under that great terror of future punishment which I now see plainly I had every reason to feel."

Under all the advantages which he at that time enjoyed, Henry Martyn became established in the faith. One great stimulant to exertion in his college-work was removed when his father died; but though the motives which governed his life were now all changed, and he worked henceforth from a different principle, he did not slacken his efforts.

At length the final examination for honours came on. There was an unusually large number of competitors, and, no doubt, many anxious hearts among them. Martyn's might have been expected to be one of the most excited; but as he entered the Senate-house, the text of a sermon which he had lately heard came into his mind and made him calm. It was this,—"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not, saith the Lord." He said afterwards that the thought had much tranquillized his mind; but he had, in truth, no need to be uneasy. His superiority was speedily manifest, and when the lists came out he was the senior wrangler.

Yet his success did not make him as happy as he expected. "I obtained my highest wishes," said he afterwards, "and found that I had grasped a shadow."

So finished his undergraduate course; and with the reputation of being "the man who had never lost an hour," he went down in March to receive the congratulations of his friends.

During the next long vacation it was that he became personally known to Mr. Simeon, who soon introduced him to one or two truly pious young men. That was a quiet interval spent in study, and especially in the practice of composition, as well as in taking pupils. He gained the first prize for the best Latin composition; which shows that he had not lost his classics in the struggle for mathematical honours; and in 1802 he gained his fellowship. But he was also very diligent in his attendance on the means of grace, and began now to taste the sweets of Christian fellowship.

Hitherto the profession of the law had been that to which he had looked forward; but his thoughts henceforward turned to the Christian ministry.

Decided in character, in whatever he took up, he was rapidly becoming one who could not be mistaken. Without the least design on his part, the principles which were gradually becoming so deeply rooted in his heart made themselves to be seen and felt. For instance, about this time he went one day to visit a family with whom he had some acquaintance, and the father of which he had just learnt was dying; and there he found a young gownsman trying to amuse

the daughters by reading a play to them. At once he turned and reproved the young man in terms so strong that he afterwards feared that a quarrel might ensue. It was not so, however; for in this case, as often afterwards, he soon had proof that plain speaking is frequently the best and the kindest mode of action. Instead of resenting the interference, the gownsman almost immediately called to thank Martyn for what he had said. A lasting impression had indeed been made on him; and a few years after these two young men were working together in India.

But Martyn's was to be no long course of labour, like those of our previous narratives; on the contrary, it was to be a very brief one; and therefore we may see that in his case the equipping for the work was to be conducted with speed. His spiritual growth was very rapid,—so rapid that his character impressed all who knew him, and he became as a wonder to many. And now the summons to what was to be his life-work was close at hand.

It came to him in this way: Mr. Simeon was one day speaking of the great good that had been effected through only one missionary, the afterwards well-known Dr. Carey; and what he said riveted the attention and made a great impression on his young friend's mind, while it led him to think deeply of the duty of carrying the gospel to the heathen. Very soon after this the "Life of David Brainerd" fell into his hands. He read it with intense interest, and soon began to feel that he must and ought himself to go. The Saviour's injunction and the miser-

able condition of the heathen alike weighed on his mind, and came to him with a force that could not be resisted; a force which he felt that he must not resist. It was a recognised summons rather than any enthusiasm of desire. At first we read of no deep longing, such as many another young missionary has since felt; on the contrary, this path of duty, so untried by the Church in those days, looked hard and full of difficulties to him, while he had very much to make life seem sweet at home. Others might and did go in search of adventures or of gold, and in the hope of returning some day to spend that gold and make a figure in the world; but what was gold to him? He had enough of it to satisfy his wants; whilst his Cambridge honours would easily lead the way to distinction. There was work in England, and plenty of it; and in England he had his many friends, his family ties, and one whom, if he stayed, he hoped some day to make his wife.

The sacrifice was great, and he felt it; but the call was loud, and he heard that, and heard it all too plainly to be mistaken; therefore, go he must. So, cutting short the struggle, which at times amounted to agony, he put himself into communication with the Committee of the then newly-formed Church Missionary Society, and thenceforward held himself ready to obey any call which it might make on him.

The following extracts will show with what mixed feelings he took the step:—

"The dejection I sometimes labour under arises . . . . from the prospect of the difficulties I have

to encounter in the whole of my future life. The thought that I might be unceasingly employed in the same kind of work, amongst poor ignorant people, is what my proud spirit revolts at. To be obliged to submit to a thousand uncomfortable things that must happen to me, whether as a minister or a missionary, is what the flesh cannot endure." Thus he spoke to his youngest sister; and just about that time he met with a returned missionary, who appears to have magnified the dreaded trials to the uttermost; perhaps having really himself undergone great hardships. Again he wrote, "Finished the account of Dr. Vanderkemp, and longed to be sent to China. . . . I had distressing thoughts about the little prospect of happiness in my future life." In fact, it is clear that at this time he seems to have anticipated trials which he was never called to suffer; but then, as will soon be explained, Henry Martyn did not eventually go out, as he was now ready to do, as a simple missionary. The Church Missionary committee had indeed much to consider in his case. They had, it is true, been now for several years waiting and praying for Englishmen who were disposed to take up this work, and they had found none. But then their one mission at that time was among the negroes of West Africa; and it had not occurred to any one that an accomplished scholar like Henry Martyn would be a suitable man to send among such people. In fact, to send a senior wrangler to Africa seemed to be simply a waste of power. In India, on the contrary, among disputatious Mussul-

mans and learned Hindoos, such talents as his would be invaluable; but then India was not open. Our Home Government had not yet consented to let any persons enter there who went with the avowed object of converting the natives; so the question remained in abeyance for a little while; and meantime Martyn was ordained to Mr. Simeon's curacy, undertaking with his work at Trinity Church the charge of the parish of Lolworth, a small village at no great distance from the university. His ministry opened with an intense earnestness of devotion but very rarely witnessed; and on the second Sunday he addressed a crowded and attentive congregation at Trinity Church, in a manner that made a great impression; for he spoke as a dying man addressing dying yet immortal beings. And every week and all the week long he gave himself to his work in a way that could not fail to arrest attention and to win souls. Morning, noon, and night indeed, was Henry Martyn at his work. "It was his meat and drink," says his biographer, "to do his Master's will;" and the manner in which he was able, as a young man of three-and-twenty, to warn sinners and to exhort and stir up Christian people to seek after holiness was perfectly marvellous. The grace of God rested on him in rich abundance, and it was manifest to his friends that he was a chosen vessel.

But the secret of his power may be found in those journals which he kept throughout his life, and which show how he schooled himself to a life of self-denial and of waiting upon God. Little, indeed, could he

have suspected that those same journals would ever be given to the public; but it is from them that we glean most of what we know of his future labours.

It was during this period that he became acquainted with Henry Kirke White, the author of some well-known hymns, and a young man of as great promise as himself,—one, too, like himself, of humble origin, possessed of transcendent talents, and withal, of such deep piety that his friends looked forward for him to a life of great usefulness. A strong friendship therefore naturally sprang up between these two young men; and Kirke White having but recently come up to college, it was Martyn's delight to give him all the help he could. But their intercourse was to be but of short duration; for the elder was soon called away to his work in the East, while the brilliant career of the young poet was soon cut short by an early death.

In the year 1804 Henry Martyn lost all his little property; and as his youngest sister, who was then unmarried, was thus left destitute, he began to doubt whether it could be his duty to go abroad, when by remaining at home he might do much to help her. So he went up to London to consult his friends, and there found that before this loss had come upon him many of them had arrived at the conclusion that in an Indian chaplaincy he would find his proper sphere of work. These friends now, therefore, very naturally felt that there was a double reason for obtaining one for him. At first there were difficulties, however; and after some time spent in consultation and in attendance at the India

House he went back to resume his ministry at Cambridge.

Mr. Grant and one or two other good men were then on the Board of Directors; and with these he had thus become personally acquainted. Mr. Grant had been in India for many years; and he at least was exceedingly anxious that the gospel should be carried to the natives of that dark land. So he only waited for an opportunity; and at length Mr. Martyn received the intelligence that probably early in the spring he would have to leave England. The next long vacation would be, therefore, he expected, his last sojourn with his family in Cornwall; and in sweet intercourse with them, and with the one dearest to him on earth, those months quickly passed away. He was most anxious to testify all round the neighbourhood where his youth had been passed, of the reality of those truths which had become so dear to him; but a rumour of the change which had come over him having preceded him to Truro, he found himself on his arrival, regarded as a Methodist, and consequently only suffered to enter the pulpits in the two churches which were under the care of his brother-in-law. In those, however, he frequently preached during those few weeks; and both his sisters thus heard him,—the younger with great delight and thankfulness, and the elder with every appearance of having been deeply impressed by his sermons. The common people, many of whom must have known him in childhood, flocked to hear him; and on one occasion the church was so full that numbers had to go away.

At length, having withstood in Cornwall, as he had done in Cambridge, all the arguments that were used to keep him in England, Mr. Martyn prepared to bid adieu to those dear to him, and to all the scenes of his infancy, and returned to Cambridge, to await the summons to leave his native land.

It was not, however, until July, 1805, that he had to sail; and being in town for many previous weeks, he preached frequently for his friends, and especially for Mr. Cecil, at St. John's. There, in fact, he delivered his farewell sermon; and so, when he went out, it was as a young man well-known, and one in whose future many were interested. During that waiting interval he had submitted to his best friends the question, whether it would be better to go out single or married. There was some difference of opinion among them; but in the end he himself concluded that he ought to go alone.

A voyage to India was a considerably longer business seventy years ago than it is at present; and this was a time of war. The *Union*, East Indiaman, in which he sailed from Portsmouth, went, therefore, in company with a large fleet, under the command of Captain Byng, and two days after starting, to his great surprise, he found that it had arrived in Falmouth, where, as it proved, it was detained three weeks. Thus the old sweet intercourse with his family and early friends was again renewed; and when the sad farewells had to be said once more, it was perhaps harder to part than ever.

After reaching his ship, which, through false

information, he had nearly allowed to go without him, he preached next day, Sunday, August 11, to the ship's company, on Heb. xi. 16, "But now they desire a better country," &c. "I rose dejected and extremely weak in body," he wrote. "After simply crying to God for mercy and assistance I preached. On repeating the text a second time I could scarcely refrain from bursting into tears, for the Mount and St. Hilary spire were just discernible by the naked eye at the time I began my sermon. We had made little way in the night; and in the morning I was pleased to find that we were in Mount's Bay, midway between the Land's End and the Lizard; and I was often with my glass recalling those beloved scenes, till after tea, when on ascending the poop I found that they had disappeared."

The fleet again came to anchor in the Cove of Cork; and there he tried to procure an opportunity of preaching both in the city and to the convicts going out with the fleet to Botany Bay; but he did not succeed.

On board his own ship Mr. Martyn regularly read prayers, and preached once every Sunday; but the captain would not allow him to do more; so that he felt that his usefulness on board ship depended on his private efforts; and almost every day he went between decks to read to any that would attend to him, who of course were only a few; and he had to be content to do this amidst all sorts of disturbance. Nor was the state of things really very much better during the Sunday service, in which but little attempt

was made to keep order for him, and during which many of the officers sat drinking, and the captain with them.

On the 31st of August the fleet, consisting of fifty transports, five men-of-war, and the Indiaman, put to sea once more, and the young chaplain again became ill in mind and body. "My anguish at times," he says, "was inexpressible, when I awoke from my disturbed dreams to find myself actually on my way, with a long sea rolling between me and all I held dear in this life. . . The bodily sufferings would be nothing, did not Satan improve his advantage in representing the happiness and ease of the life I had left."

They were soon overtaken by a tremendous storm, and were in great danger; but it passed, and afterwards the wind carried them more rapidly on; yet they only reached Madeira by the end of September. Meantime, however, he had done a very good work on board,—that is to say, his faithful preaching, his faithful private reproofs, his constant watchfulness for opportunities of doing good, had made every one feel that he was in earnest; and whilst his message had the common effect of making some stand aloof and oppose, it had also drawn several to him; so that of two or three he began to have good hopes that a real impression had been made on them.

He read Hindoostanee, astronomy, Milner's Church History, Hooker's sermons, and other works, during this voyage, which could have been no idle time. But a short extract from his journal will best show how he

worked: "Had a long conversation with Major D——: from his great anxiety, and extraordinary humility in being willing to receive instruction from me, I was very earnest. With the utmost possible plainness, in every variety of expression and illustration, did I endeavour to point out the difference between the way of salvation by the law and by the gospel. Yet without making objections his mind seemed to continue in darkness. I next had conversation with ——, one of the cadets, who appeared to seek it. He seems very well disposed. I offered him instruction in mathematics and classics, which he accepted. Next with the chief mate, commended his leaving off swearing; which, I observe, is already the case. I reminded him of the necessity of putting off the old man, and being renewed, &c. He is one of the worthiest men in the ship; but we cannot continue long on religion, he is so soon out of his depth. He said he always avoided anger, ever since he heard a sermon on the subject, the finest he ever heard, one Wednesday, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars. Went below, in hopes of reading Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted;' but there was no getting down, as they were leaking out water; so I sat with the seamen on the gun-deck, in the boatswain's berth. At the request of one of them I gave them a Bible, two Testaments, Baxter's 'Call,' and some tracts for one mess, consisting of six. As I sat there I had a long and close conversation with the carpenter, who wished to appear better informed than the rest; he would not believe that he was not safe in acting according to his own good thoughts. The

steward, whom I formerly spoke to for swearing, and from whom I received a disrespectful answer, used the same expression. I reproved him again, and received the same answer,—that in his own thoughts he was innocent, for he meant nothing. I told him that his sin was in mentioning those words without meaning anything. This seemed to strike him very forcibly. Coming up I met the purser, who was ill. I presently began with him, and talked a considerable time. Next with Sergeant C——, but could not go on, as the soldiers began to gather round us too near the quarter deck. Lastly, with Corporal B——, who seemed in a very low state. I can get nothing from him, poor fellow: I hardly know what difficulties he may have to contend with."

After remaining four days at Funchal, in Madeira, the fleet put to sea, the army having previously been informed that their object was the capture of the Cape of Good Hope, which then belonged to the Dutch, who had taken part with the French against us. This piece of news caused Mr. Martyn to redouble his efforts in speaking to those who might so soon be numbered with the dead. And while on shore he no doubt had access to the crews of all the vessels.

The fleet next touched at St. Salvador, in South America; and this part of the voyage occupied five weeks, in the course of which they narrowly escaped shipwreck more than once. Again they landed, and again, as he had been at Madeira, was our missionary distressed at the sight of so many Popish supersti-

tions, and by the thought that this most romantically beautiful country still lay in darkness, and that none were sent to preach Jesus Christ to them in all simplicity. He found there, however, some with whom he could converse in French, and was hospitably received by a young man named Antonio Joseph Corré, who had been educated at a Portuguese university, and was anxious to hear about Cambridge. With this young man he got a good deal of conversation about England and religious matters. Then there came a priest whom he addressed in Latin, but the poor man blushed and regretted he did not speak it. After a short time free conversation began, and most of the Romish errors were discussed. Similar conversations afterwards followed; and thus it proved that this short visit to that coast was to be an opportunity of speaking words whereby those with whom he conversed might be saved.

A few weeks more brought them to the Cape.

On the 2nd of January, 1806, the high lands became visible; on the 3rd the fleet anchored, and the signal was immediately given to land.

"When I got up," wrote Mr. Martin, "the army had left the shore, except the company's troops who remained to guard the landing-place; but soon after seven a most tremendous fire of artillery began behind a mountain abreast of the ship; it seemed as if the mountain itself were torn by intestine convulsions. The smoke rose from a lesser eminence on the right of the hill, and on the top of it troops were seen rushing down the farther declivity: then came

such a long-drawn fire of musketry that I could not have conceived anything like it. We all shuddered at considering what a multitude of souls must be passing into eternity."

He was soon busy on the battle-field, doing what he could for those who were wounded.

Then the English flag was seen flying; and the Cape of Good Hope was ours. He had most unexpectedly witnessed its capture; and now, being in the country, he was very desirous to meet with Dr. Vanderkemp, one of the first and most distinguished missionaries sent out by the London Missionary Society. After a little inquiry he found him and his fellow-labourer Mr. Read, surrounded by a number of black people, and at that very time in great need; —the English expedition seemed just timed to meet their necessities. Major D—— proposed sending them £10 that night.

Mr. Read told Mr. Martyn of the great success which had attended their efforts, and how they often heard the poor Hottentots pouring out their hearts in prayer in the bush. "Walking home," said our missionary, "I asked Dr. Vanderkemp if he ever repented of his undertaking. 'No,' said the old man, smiling, 'and I would not exchange my work for a kingdom.' Yet he had often been so reduced as to have hardly any clothes to cover him." At length the ship again weighed anchor; and sickness and languor once more tried the spirits. Moreover, there was a great deal of sickness on board, and much mortality. When able to leave his bed Mr. Martyn was therefore seldom idle.

On the 19th of April Ceylon was in sight, and on the 22nd they anchored in the Madras Roads. He went on shore in one of the country boats, made very high in order to weather the surf, and was soon surrounded by coolies who carried his boxes and other things to shore. "I felt a sort of melancholy," said he, "at the sight of so many idolaters." The very first Sunday he preached; and Sir E. P. next morning remarked, "Upon my word, Mr. Martyn, you gave us a good trimming yesterday."

Once more, on the 14th of May, the *Union* found herself in danger. She struck on a reef, and was considered by the captain as lost; but after being in great danger for two hours, she unexpectedly floated off, and from Calcutta Mr. Martyn wrote, "My long and wearisome voyage is concluded, and I am at last arrived in the country in which I am to spend my days in the work of the Lord. Scarcely can I believe myself to be so happy as to be actually in India." The voyage, in fact, had occupied about nine months.

"During many years," says Martyn's biographer, "supplications had incessantly ascended up to heaven from Christians in India for the spiritual prosperity of that benighted land; and for a considerable time a stated weekly meeting had been held at Calcutta, on the recommendation of Dr. Buchanan and Mr. Brown, for the express purpose of beseeching the Lord to send forth labourers into those fields, which were white unto the harvest." Mr. Martyn's arrival was, therefore, hailed as one manifest answer to

these petitions; and he found himself heartily welcomed into the small company of true Christians who were living in the midst of the great mass of the grossest kinds of worldly society and heathenism.

Dr. Carey seems to have been the first of the missionary band with whom he met; and he found him hard at work with his translations. Dr. Buchanan was just starting southward to make his interesting researches among the ancient Syrian churches of Travancore; and he sailed out of the Hooghly as the *Union* East Indiaman sailed up the river; and the two missionary chaplains thus unwittingly crossed each other. Mr. Brown, however, warmly received him at his house at Aldeen, near the city, and fitted up a neighbouring pagoda to serve him as a study, whilst the question of his actual destination was pending; and there Mr. Martyn went vigorously to work at once with his Hindoostanee; but he also preached a great deal while he remained in Calcutta, both at the old mission-church and at the new church, and that with considerable effect. For at once he arrested the attention of all, whether religious or worldly-minded, and there was a great sensation; the Christian people almost overwhelming him with entreaties that he would remain in Calcutta, to which proposal they got the Governor's consent; and the worldly party offering the most strenuous and bitter opposition to his ministry. These two facts are proofs in themselves of the faithfulness and intense earnestness with which this young man went to work. His was no

mere soothing or lulling message. It was ever his aim to rouse the conscience and bring conviction of sin to the heart; and therefore neither the openly licentious nor the thorough worldling could sit quietly under his sermons. They roused the natural enmity of the human heart; and a storm broke out against him in the new church, such as in these days even good manners would forbid. He was, in fact, pursued by printed pamphlets after he had left the city. But, on the other hand, the religious people were delighted. They felt that the city of Calcutta offered a sphere exactly suited to his talents, and that his faithful ministry was exactly what was needed. Solicitations that he would remain continually poured in upon him. The old mission-church which had been built by Kiernander, a missionary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in 1771, was offered to him with the salary of a chaplain, and a house besides. For this church, had then recently been purchased by Mr. Charles Grant, and vested in trustees.

"But," as he said, "I was deaf to any such proposal." . . . . To be prevented going to the heathen would have broken my heart."

After several months had elapsed, during which he had one sharp illness, which alarmed his friends, he was appointed to Dinapore. The voyage up the river occupied several weeks, during which time he studied Sanscrit as well as Hindoostanee; but he also did a good deal of missionary work by the way, by landing from time to time and getting

into conversation with any Bengalees whom he happened to meet. "Being invited by the Brahmins to walk in," he wrote of one place where the worship of Kali was going on, "I entered within the railings, and asked a few questions about the idol. The Brahmin disputed with great heat, and his tongue ran faster than I could follow, and the people (who were about one hundred) shouted applause. But I continued to ask my questions without making any remarks upon the answers. I asked, among other things, whether what I had heard of Vishnu and Brahma was true, which he confessed. I forbore to press him with the consequences, which he seemed to feel; and then I told him what was my belief. The man grew quite mild, and said it was *chula bat* (good), and asked me seriously at last what I thought:—'Was idol-worship true or false?' I felt it a matter of thankfulness that I could make known the truth of God, though but a stammerer, and that I had declared it in the presence of the devil. . . I never was more astonished than at the change in the deportment of this hot-headed Brahmin."

Further on, coming to a place where the people spoke another dialect, he said, "I had to speak through the medium of my Mussulman Musalchee. They said they only did as others did, and that if they were wrong, then all Bengal was wrong. I felt love for their souls, and longed for utterance to declare unto these people the holy gospel. I think that when my mouth is opened I shall preach to them day and night."

Such extracts as these show not only how diligently he was working, but how speedily a real enthusiasm for his work had already got the better of the old repugnance to being always amongst such people as these, which he had felt before he left college.

On the 26th of November he reached Dinapore, and next morning breakfasted with General C. "Throughout the day," he wrote, "depressed in spirits, but in my evening walk my drooping soul was visited in meditation by a gracious God. He taught me to see that I was now brought to act in the presence of God and Christ, and a great cloud of witnesses; that the more closely I walked with God the more unconcerned I should be about the opinions of men, whose behaviour sometimes cuts me to the heart."

Next day he began his work among the soldiers, and gave them some religious books. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress" appears to have been one of which he constantly made use in such ministrations, and it would seem that he found it very useful.

As chaplain, this work among the Europeans, of whom at some stations the greater part would be the military, was of course his special office. It was that for which he was sent out; but we are chiefly interested to see how much of missionary work he was able to mingle with it.

He had three objects, we are told, which, on arriving at Dinapore, he set before him: to establish native schools; to attain such readiness in speaking Hindoo-

stanee as to be able to preach in that language; and to prepare translations of the Scriptures and religious tracts for circulation. "Morning with Pundit, occupied in Sanscrit," he writes in one place in his journal —the study of Sanscrit having been recommended by his Pundit as the best means of acquiring all Oriental languages,—"in the afternoon hearing a parable in the Bahar dialect. Continued till late at night, writing on the parables. My soul much oppressed with the immeasurable importance of my work, and the wickedness and cruelty of wasting a moment, when so many nations are, as it were, waiting for my work."

But this sort of work was frequently interrupted by the objections of his Brahmin Pundit and his Mussulman Moonshee. "Dictating to-day the explanation of a parable to the Moonshee, I had occasion to give the proofs of the corruption of human nature. . . . I think I never saw such a striking instance of the truth grappling with human nature: he seemed like a fish when he first finds that the hook has laid hold on him. He was in a dreadful rage, and endeavoured to escape from the convictions these truths produced, but seemingly in vain."

"Passed the morning with the Moonshee and Pundit, dictating to the former a few ideas for the explanation of the parable of the rich fool. When I came to say that there would be no eating and drinking, &c., in heaven, but only the pleasure of God's presence and holiness; and that therefore we must acquire a taste for such pleasures, the Mussulman was unwilling

to write, but the Brahmin was pleased, and said all this was in their Puranas."

"At night the Moonshee began a dispute which lasted three hours and a half, on metaphysical subjects, and was therefore unprofitable. It began from something I was dictating to him from the New Testament."

Except among the sick in hospital, he had at first but little comfort in his work among the Europeans. The wealthy and prosperous among them would evidently have preferred a worldly chaplain, who would have been content to perform certain forms and ceremonies which they esteemed necessary, and at other times would have lived amongst them as one of themselves. These people, therefore, not only grieved his spirit by the behaviour which he witnessed in their houses, and by the opposition made to the introduction of religious subjects into conversation, but they discountenanced all his work among the natives. There were but few Indian chaplains in those days; and therefore, though stationed at Dinapore, Mr. Martyn was frequently called to travel as much as sixty or seventy miles in order to perform a marriage ceremony; on which occasions he always made opportunities of speaking for his Master.

In the month of February, 1807, he completed the translation of the Book of Common Prayer into Hindoostanee, a work, as his biographer truly observes, that would have been worth living for, if he had lived for nothing else. In the following month he was thus enabled to begin a service in Hindoostanee,

and to conclude with an exhortation in the same language. At this service he had, strangely enough, about two hundred women, Portuguese, Roman Catholics, and Mahometans, crowding to attend the service of the Church of England, which had lost nothing, doubtless, of its beautiful simplicity in being clothed with an Oriental dress.

In the course of that same month Mr. Martyn was able to write to Mr. Corrie, "The little book of the parables is finished." This was rapid work indeed, when we remember that only in the May of the previous year had he landed in Calcutta; but already had he also begun his translation of the whole of the New Testament into Hindoostanee.

His Sunday's labour at that time consisted of one service only, and that at seven in the morning, with the Europeans, who seem to have made difficulties about having a second; but he had this other, just described, at two in the afternoon for the Hindoos; after which he had to spend some time in the hospital; and then in the evening he received any soldiers who were disposed to go to him. In a little time he had the comfort of finding some of these seriously impressed; and often on other evenings of the week he enjoyed spiritual communion with them. Over some few of the officers stationed at Dinapore he began to rejoice ere the end of the year, and "one of these, who from the first had treated him with the kindness of a father, at this time excited expectations which soon ripened into a delightful certainty, that he had turned with full purpose of heart to the Lord."

But all this work was carried on in much weakness of body. He was already much reduced by the debilitating effects of the climate; added to which he had done himself much harm by his habit of rather frequent fasting.

It was a mistake which he at length discovered, and consequently he discontinued the practice; but perhaps few persons in the present day would read his memoir without feeling that he often put a mental as well as bodily strain on himself which must have been injurious to his health; and that in fact, much of the deadness and coldness of spirit over which he so constantly mourned in his earlier journals, was, in all probability, the result of bodily weakness.

The habit of self-examination may become a constant system of introspection which must tend to depression; yet it is a habit into which a man almost cut off from Christian society, and yearning after holiness, may very easily fall. Our blessed Lord sent the seventy, two by two, on their missionary journeys; and had Henry Martyn taken Mr. Cecil's advice and gone out married, he might perhaps have been longer spared to the Church; but he then feared that if he did so, his work might suffer in consequence. He was not long in India, however, before he felt that he might venture to write and ask her to whom he had been long attached, to come out and become his wife; but when he had taken this step, a long interval he knew must elapse before the reply could reach him.

Happily for his peace of mind he was just then

more than usually occupied, and his time more than filled up with the quantity of translation which he had undertaken. Indeed, his brother chaplains had speedily discovered his extraordinary linguistic talent, and they were not backward to make use of it. Within three months after the completion of his work on the parables, and whilst he was earnestly labouring to produce a Hindoostanee version of the New Testament, Mr. Brown wrote to press on him the superintendence of a Persian translation. He had been studying Persian for some time along with Sanscrit and Hindoostanee, because he was told that from Dinapore to Damascus, Persian was understood and spoken. The truth is, that he was labouring hard to make himself generally acquainted with all the principal Oriental languages. "Chiefly employed in translating Hebrew into Hindoostanee," we read many times in his journal; and "reading Persian" frequently follows. "The Hindoo translation will, I fear, be very long a source of perplexity to us," Again, "Translating and reading Persian, and examining Persian translations of Scripture. My employment all day Hebrew, Persian, and translations in Hindoo."

In the midst of all this work there came to him the news of several successive trials,—first in the death of his eldest sister; then in the rejection of his overture of marriage, "for reasons which afterwards commended themselves to his own judgment;" and lastly, in the death of his youngest sister, of which last trouble Mr. Simeon wrote to tell him.

"The Lord sanctify this" he wrote when the ship

arrived, which instead of bringing him, as he hoped it would, a wife, brought instead a letter which destroyed all his hopes of domestic happiness; "and since this last desire of my heart is also withheld, may I turn away for ever from the world, and henceforth live forgetful of all but God."

Just after the receipt of this letter, however, his thoughts were in a measure diverted from his grief by the arrival of his coadjutors in the work of translation: Mirza of Benares, well known in India as an eminent Hindoostanee scholar, and Sabat the Arabian, since but too well known in England as well as in India, by his rejection of that faith which he then appeared to profess in sincerity and truth. Mr. Martyn welcomed this latter very warmly, however, because he naturally regarded him as a Christian brother,—which at that time there was every reason to believe him to be; but his Arab temper soon broke out; and it was not long before he proved a very thorn in Mr. M.'s side, and yet one that he felt himself obliged to endure, as long as the work for which Sabat was engaged went on.

In the April of 1809 Mr. Martyn was removed from Dinapore to Cawnpore, where he was very cordially received by Capt. and Mrs. Sherwood, the latter being the well-known authoress.

Notwithstanding that he had had several severe illnesses, and that much weakness of body remained, he nevertheless imprudently took this journey during the great heat. "The month of April, in the upper provinces of Hindoostan, is one of the most dreadful

months for travelling throughout the year," wrote Mrs. Sherwood; "indeed, no European at that time can remove from place to place but at the peril of his life. But Mr. Martyn had that anxiety to be in the work which his heavenly Father had given him to do, that notwithstanding the violent heat he travelled from Chunar to Cawnpore, a distance of about four hundred miles. At that time, as I well remember, the air was as hot and dry as that which I have sometimes felt near the mouth of a large oven—no friendly cloud or verdant carpet of grass to relieve the eye from the strong glare of the rays of the sun, pouring on the sandy plain of the Ganges. Thus Mr. Martyn travelled, journeying day and night, and arrived at Cawnpore in such a state that he fainted away as soon as he entered the house. When we charged him with the rashness of hazarding his life in this way, he pleaded his anxiety to get to the great work. He remained with us ten days, suffering considerably from fever and pain in the chest."

By that time he had actually undertaken to superintend, along with the Persian version, another of the Scriptures into Arabic!

In the same year, however, he began his more public ministrations among the heathen, by preaching to several hundred beggars, who had collected round his house, from a Hindoostanee translation of Genesis.

And every week he held this service and preached to increasingly large congregations, as long as he remained in Cawnpore.

The numbers sometimes amounted to as many as

eight hundred ; and the attention of his congregations became more and more encouraging as he went on, while sometimes a great impression was produced. This was indeed seed cast upon the waters ; and although in his lifetime he was permitted to see but small results, yet surely after many days he shall gather of the fruit.

In the April of that year Mr. Martyn's health began so decidedly to fail, that at length (though not till some months more had passed) the necessity of rest and relaxation forced itself upon him.

It was the hereditary consumptive disease which had carried off all the rest of his family that then threatened him, and he knew it :—" My chest in pain." " My lungs still so disordered that I could not meet my men at night." " Passed a sleepless night." " Half alive all day." Then, " Much better." " Preached to the dragoons." " Imprudently joined in conversation with some dear Christian friends at night, and talked a great deal; the pain in the chest in consequence returned." Such entries at that date occur continually. All his friends in England as well as in India were alarmed, and Mr. Simeon especially wrote most anxiously to caution him. At length, so rapidly did his strength give way, that it became perfectly clear that he must try either a sea voyage or a return to England for a short time ; and he was about deciding on the latter course, when discouraging information received from Calcutta, respecting the Persian New Testament, made by Sabat under his superintendence, changed his course.

That version was considered too imperfect to print; it required very many amendments, contained too many Arabic expressions, and the style, though pretty well suited to the learned, was not suited to the common people.

"At this decision," says his biographer, "Mr. Martyn was as keenly disappointed, as he was delighted with the complete success of the Hindoostanee version; but meeting the disappointment with that elasticity which is the result of lively faith, he instantly resolved—after committing his way to God, and consulting his friends Mr. Corrie and Mr. Brown on the subject—to go into Arabia and Persia, for the purpose of collecting the opinions of learned natives with respect to the Persian translation, which had been rejected,—as well as the Arabic one, which was yet incomplete, though nearly finished."

"But can I then bring myself to cut the string and let you go?" said Mr. Brown in his own characteristic way. "I confess I could not if you were strong and likely to last half a century. But as you burn with the intenseness and rapid blaze of heated phosphorus, why should we not make the most of you? Your flame may last as long, perhaps a little longer, in Arabia than in India. Where should the phœnix build her odoriferous nest, but in the land prophetically called 'the blessed'? And where shall we ever expect, but from that country, the true comforter to come to the nations of the East? I contemplate your New Testament springing up, as it were, from dust and ashes, but beautiful 'as the wings of a

dove covered with silver, and her feathers like yellow gold.' "

Mr. Martyn's last sermon to the natives at Cawnpore was preached in a new church which he himself had been the means of getting built; and it was on the life, miracles, death, and resurrection of the Saviour, in whom he concluded by exhorting them to believe. "He began," said one who heard him, "in a weak and faint voice, being at that time in a very bad state of health; but, gathering strength as he proceeded, he seemed like one inspired from on high. Never was an audience more affected. The next day this holy and heavenly man left Cawnpore, and the society of many who loved him and admired him. He left us with little hope of seeing him again until, by the mercy of our Saviour, we meet with him in our Father's house."

He passed down the Ganges to Mr. Brown's house at Aldeen, which he had left four years before. And when his friends saw his pallid countenance and wasted frame their hearts sank within them. "He is on his way to Arabia," wrote Mr. Thomason to Mr. Simeon. "You know his genius, and what gigantic strides he takes in everything. He has some great plan in his head of which I am no competent judge; but as far as I do understand it, the object is far too grand for one short life."

Notwithstanding this exhaustion, however, he preached every Sunday that he remained in Calcutta, with one exception; and on the 7th of January, 1811, he quitted India for Shiraz in Persia, taking passage

in the ship *Akmoody*, the captain of which had once been a pupil of Schwartz. This voyage occupied altogether some five months; and it probably was a means of prolonging Mr. Martyn's life for a little while, and though but for a little while, yet for a work which was perhaps more remarkable than anything that had preceded it. The vessel touched at various places on its way. He landed at Ceylon, and afterwards at the Portuguese settlement of Goa, where he visited the tomb of Xavier. It was on his thirtieth birthday that the vessel anchored at Bombay. His entry in his journal that day is very characteristic: "I am now at the age at which the Saviour of men began His ministry, and at which John the Baptist called a nation to repentance. Let me now think for myself and act with energy. Hitherto I have made my youth and insignificance an excuse for sloth and imbecility: now let me have a character and act for God," a resolution which he carried out two days later; when being entertained on shore, and a free religious discussion taking place at dinner, he said, "Becoming very familiar, I took upon myself to give him [the host] advice about the necessity of praying, and keeping the Sabbath, and acting up to the light that he had."

It was Easter Sunday when they came in sight of the Persian coast, and anchored in Muscat Harbour. And no sooner did he get on shore, than this devoted young man seemed to find constant opportunities of preaching the gospel in the way of casual conversations. In his journal we find the following entries:—

"Conversed a good deal with an Arab soldier and his African slave, who was very intelligent about religion. They asked to see the Gospel. The instant I gave them a copy in Arabic the poor boy began to read, and carried it off as a great prize."

It was on the 21st of May that he wrote, "Landed at Bushire this morning *in good health.* We were hospitably received by the acting Resident. In the evening I walked out by the sea-side to recollect myself, to review the past, and look forward to the future."

The voyage apparently had done him good, and had it not been for the fatigues of subsequent journeys his life might have been much prolonged. But though "travelling for health and knowledge," the former often suffered through his refusal to see any difficulties in his way. He had now to push on to Shiraz, in order to carry out his desired researches. It was but a few days' journey; but the heat was unexpectedly so intense as to endanger his life. Eight days, however, were consumed in preparation before they started, and during these he hastened to begin the special work for which he had come. "I showed Hosyn, an Arab, the most learned man here, a passage of the New Testament according to the four versions of Erpenius, English, Polyglot, and Sabat. He condemned the first three, but said of Sabat's, "This is good, very good."

On Sunday "the Europeans assembled for divine service;" and next day he wrote, "Very ill from headache and overpowering sleepiness, arising, as I suppose,

from stroke of the sun." Then the day following, "Again restored. . . . . The Resident gave us some account this evening of the moral state of Persia. It is enough to make one shudder."

"May 30th.—Our Persian dresses being ready, we set out this evening for Shiraz. Our kafila consisted of about thirty horses and mules. . . . The animal for my use was a yaboo or riding pony, a mule for my trunks, and one for my servant Zechariah, an Armenian of Ispahan. . . . Mr. B., who accompanied us a little way, soon returned, Captain T. went on, intending to accompany us to Shiraz. . . . At first the heat was not greater than in India, but it soon became so intense as to be quite alarming." The thermometer at sunrise stood at 112. I began to lose my strength fast. Travelling by night and resting by day in tents, he wrote that at the end of the first day, during which he had covered himself with a blanket as a defence against the external air, he simply composed himself as best he might, thinking that death was inevitable. Afterwards he tried the experiment of enveloping his head and body in a wet towel, and that with some success. Unable at last in the least to guide his horse, he did, however, as it appears almost by a miracle, survive that terrible journey, and arrive safely at Shiraz, the celebrated seat of Persian learning, on the 9th of June; and there, having ascertained the general correctness of the opinion given of Sabat's version in Calcutta, he began a new translation within little more than a week after his arrival.

He appears to have been fortunate in his host, Jaffier Ali Khan, a benevolent and kind-hearted man, who seems to have been entirely unbigoted to his own religion; and whose brother, Mirza Seid Ali Khan, became Mr. Martyn's assistant in translation; and he found them both disposed for free discussion on religious subjects. But he was himself an object of much interest in Shiraz; so that at once he had numerous visitors, and of all ranks.

The great-grandson of Nadir Shah was one of the very first to present himself; then came the prince's secretary, two Mahomedan Moolahs, then two young men from the college, with various others; who all came to discuss the subject of religion. He had Jews also among his visitors, apostate Jews, who through bribery had become Moslems, for many such were to be found in Persia. It was, indeed, a most wonderful opportunity for preaching the gospel. In the character of a missionary he could not have entered Persia at all. But the primary object that brought him there, was not that of a mission to the Persian people. He was there on literary business, and that connected with the sacred book of his own religion. In such a character, therefore, neither the Shah himself nor the Persian philosophers were inclined to treat him at once as an intruder. Some time, therefore, was gained for declaring the truth in that land which had for so long been closed against it; and of that time he made the best use that he could.

He was accessible to any who liked to come to him;

and many took advantage of the opportunity. When the heat became very great in the middle of July, however, his kind host pitched a tent for him in the middle of a garden in the suburbs, where amidst clusters of grapes, and by the side of a clear stream, he sat under an orange-tree to pursue his work of translation whenever he was alone.

At length so much attention was drawn to him and to his work, that the Moojtuhid, or Professor of Mahometan law, consented to a public discussion on religious topics—a discussion which Mr. Martyn on his side appears to have managed with profound skill. The result of this was such a general spirit of inquiry, that the Preceptor of all the Moollahs was incited to publish a defence of his own creed. To this, of course, Mr. Martyn quickly replied in the same manner, and he thus got an opportunity of publishing a clear statement of the evidences of Christianity.

The divinity of Christ and His atoning work was soon the great matter on which the minds of many were exercised; and of his great opponent, Mirza Ibraheem, he began to feel assured that he was really inquiring about the gospel.

At length, when the translation was sufficiently advanced, Mr. Martyn had two splendid copies prepared, for presentation to the King of Persia and the prince, his son. He had also by the month of November fully decided to remain in Shiraz all the winter, for the purpose of making a translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew into Persian. On Christmas Day he made a great feast for the Russians and

Armenians in the city; and at Jaffier Ali Khan's request invited the master of the great sect of Soofies, with whom also he had intercourse.

"The last has been," he wrote in his journal, "a memorable year. I have been led, by what I have reason to consider as the particular providence of God, to this place, and have undertaken an important work, which . . . . is now nearly finished. . . . . The present year will probably be a perilous one; but my life is of little consequence, whether I live to finish the Persian New Testament, or do not. . . . . The more I see of my own works, the more I am ashamed of them." And further on, "This is my birthday. . . . Such a painful year I never passed, owing to the privations I have been called to on the one hand, and the spectacle before me of human depravity on the other. But I hope that I have not come to this seat of Satan in vain. The word of God has found its way into Persia."

It was a wonderful fact indeed, for never has a country been more closely barred against it. Yet such a stir had he been the cause of producing, that he was led to undertake a second public disputation, which was held in a court in the palace of one of the princes, where a numerous body of Moollahs attended, in the midst of whom Mr. Martyn "stood up alone to maintain and proclaim the divinity of the Son of God"—that very doctrine which Moslems cannot endure.

He left the city soon after, with a good hope that lasting effects might result from what had been done;

and then, in company with an English clergyman, with whom he fell in, he set out with the intention of attempting himself to lay his New Testament before the king. Finding, however, that without a letter from the British ambassador he could not be admitted, he went on to Tebriz, where Sir Gore Ouseley resided. Thence he proceeded to the king's camp at Teheran. But his efforts to accomplish this object were all unavailing. Difficulties were thrown in his way at every turn; and instead of the patient hearing that he had obtained at Shiraz, he now met everywhere with neglect and contempt. His life, indeed, was threatened; and he was at length forced in bitter disappointment to give up this his cherished desire, and with his companion to turn again towards Tebriz. On his way thither he and all the party were seized with ague and fever; and when the others had recovered he had a relapse. At length, scarcely alive, he reached Tebriz, and there for two months he was laid on a sick bed with severe fever, during which he was tenderly nursed and cared for by Sir Gore and Lady Ouseley.*

On his recovery, the thought which he had entertained in India came back; and he wrote to Mr. Grant for leave to return home, and to Mr. Simeon

* And what he had failed in accomplishing himself Sir Gore Ouseley promised to do for him, namely, to present his New Testament to the Persian king. This promise he kept; and the king publicly expressed his approbation of the work. Sir Gore also carried it to St. Petersburg, where it was printed and put into circulation under his superintendence.

and his still beloved Lydia that he was coming. To Mr. Simeon he spoke of this step as a measure that he would disapprove ; " but you would not," he added, " did you know to what a pitiable state I am reduced. If you wish not to see me, I think it most probable that you will not, the way before me being not better than that passed over, which has nearly killed me."

So he set out on the 2nd of September, 1812, intending to travel by Constantinople, not entirely alone, it is true, but accompanied only by Eastern servants ; and at length reached Tocat, where on the 16th of October, " either falling," says his biographer, " a sacrifice to the plague which then raged there, or sinking under that disorder which had so greatly reduced him, he surrendered his soul into the hands of his Redeemer," dying at the age of thirty-one.

On such a life it is vain to descant or to enlarge ; the story speaks for itself : it is that of one who truly yielded himself a living sacrifice to the Lord and Master whom he loved so well.

How many missionaries have been made by Henry Martyn's example it is impossible to say ; but as David Brainerd was his own pattern, so has he been a pattern to others, and in that way alone therefore has he proved a spiritual father to many. " Look at that blessed man," it was Mr. Simeon's wont to say when he looked at his picture, " how he seems to say, ' Be in earnest, don't trifle, don't trifle.' " And is not this in truth the great message which may be called Henry Martyn's legacy to the Church still militant below ?

CHAPTER X.

JOSIAH PRATT.

1768—1844.

"Seldom has it been given to one man to witness such fruits from labours which he was justly entitled, humanly speaking, to call his own, but of which he would disclaim all the merit and the glory."—*Rev. H. Venn.*

"BUT," some reader of these sketches may ask, "was Josiah Pratt a leading man,—a father in the Church? That he was one of the excellent of the earth we know; but in what sense a leader?"

Happily by his time good names were becoming so far common that it is necessary to give a reason for the selection; and certain it is that, compared with some of the foregoing, his was a quiet life, and, moreover, one spent, so far as he felt that he could command its circumstances, *in the background.* It may seem, therefore, a contradiction in terms to call him a leader. And yet, with reference to many of the mighty works then starting, such he was; for where he was not the one to suggest, he was often the one to put the affair into working order; and, moreover, of one of the noblest machineries ever planned by mortal man, he was the chief organizer. I am using strong expressions; I am speaking in what, to many, may

sound like the language of hyperbole; but the fact is, that in order to form any correct judgment regarding the great matters with which Josiah Pratt had to do, we must disentangle ourselves from our commonplace ideas about them, as well as from the details of the work; and we must even, for the time being, lose sight of the flaws and blemishes in each and every body of workers, and, as it were, place ourselves on some elevation whence we can get a view of the drama then acting on the stage of this world; and amidst all the confusion and bustle and strife, calmly set ourselves to track the movements of the Church of God. With that church, we know, the Saviour is ever spiritually present; and therefore when any great activity is manifested in the right direction, of this, His Spirit is the author and guide.

Now, we cannot doubt that, at the period respecting which we are now speaking, a great epoch had been reached, namely, the epoch of that mighty revolution which shook Europe from one end to the other, and which was succeeded by the Napoleonic and anti-Napoleonic wars, in which millions of lives were lost, and rivers shed of human blood; and all within the compass of some thirty years. And whether those commentators are correct or not, who see in all this a fulfilment of the vision of the "vintage of the world," described by the apostle John in Rev. xiv. 17—20, yet certain it is that there was in those days a most ghastly reaping, from which England alone of the countries of Europe was mercifully free.

Meantime, or perhaps more correctly speaking,

just before this time, the Church of God had, as every preceding sketch has gone to show, not only begun to awake, but begun also to move; and already, before this terrible vintage, had the angel spoken of in ver. 6 (if, again, the interpretation be correct) begun to spread his wings for flight.

A figurative angel, as it was a figurative vintage, no doubt, yet with no figurative work to do. "I saw," says St. John in this verse, elsewhere quoted, "another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

We know the date of the French Revolution; but perhaps few of us remark that this great and general movement in the Church of Christ has its date too, and that this great uprising to do a long-forgotten duty was, in fact, contemporaneous in England, with those awful events in France. So the flight, the glorious flight, began, and at first, side by side with the vintage; but it goes on still, and quickens as it goes; so that there is hope that ere very many years shall be past, all nations shall at least have heard the joyful sound.

Meanwhile there has been, and is, One above, moving, guiding, watching all that has been done. The beings who make up the great moving body are each and all chosen and trained and sent; and in the very selection and preparation of these beings we now see, as we look back over the past, such proofs of His working, that perhaps none more convincing or more easy of recognition are anywhere to be found.

Let us keep this in mind as we trace the history of the particular individual, so urgently needed, and so wondrously made ready to step into his place; just as one of the greatest of those great societies, represented, as we suppose, by the angel in the vision, was in that particular stage of its existence which made such a man a necessity to it.

It was when Wilberforce and Simeon were in their tenth years that Josiah Pratt was born at Birmingham; on the 21st of December, 1768. His father, a member of Mr. Riland's congregation, and one of his lay helpers, was a man of such earnest and deep piety, that Mr. Cecil, who knew him, once remarked that he never saw any other person who so reminded him of the character of the Redeemer as did Mr. Pratt! Young Josiah had therefore, as we may suppose, an unusually happy and good home-training. His early years seem, moreover, to have passed tranquilly, and to have been free from occurrences that might have tended to excite in him a love of variety, of roving, or adventure, for which sort of life he was not intended.

He was taken from school, as was not uncommon in those days in the case of boys intended for business, at the early age of twelve, and placed first in his father's manufactory; whence after some years he was transferred to another, in order to gain more experience of business. But all this time he had a love of books of which his father was by no means aware; for he rather kept this taste to himself, under the idea that the money secretly devoted to

the purchase of books, and that large part of his leisure which he spent in reading them, might be considered as wasted, in one like him. In this manner, therefore, he got what so many clergymen lack,—both a knowledge of business, and also business habits.

There is no record of his having shown distinct evidence of piety in his early boyhood; and when he was clearly acted on by the Holy Spirit, it was through no shipwreck, storm, or sudden shock, nor in any other sort of excitement. A solemn effect was produced on his mind, as he used to tell in after years, by the very earnest manner in which young Charles Simeon, then recently ordained, once read the service in St. Mary's Chapel, the church which he used to attend; and on another occasion, still earlier, he had been much struck by some of the petitions in the Liturgy. But not until his seventeenth year did any lasting work seem to have taken place in his heart; and the means then used were of the simplest character. Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, was preaching for Mr. Riland; and his peculiarly solemn manner of uttering the words, "Let us pray," so struck young Josiah that he was led into a serious train of thought on the nature of prayer, and then into a self-questioning frame of mind, succeeded by much contrition, and a complete surrender of himself to God and His service. Like Mr. Simeon, his own pastor, Mr. Riland, had societies for spiritual communion amongst his flock; and young Pratt soon joined one of these; and very shortly afterwards he began to feel a great desire to become a minister of Christ.

He had, however, some fear that as his elder brother had gone to settle in Baltimore, he might be required in the business; hence it was not until he had for some time made it a subject of earnest prayer, that God would be pleased to incline his father to consent, that he ventured to speak of his wish.

When at length he did so, he met, as we might have supposed, with a very glad and hearty approval; and being also kindly released by the friend to whom he was partly bound in business, a tutor was immediately engaged to prepare him for college, and in June, 1789, he matriculated at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford; going into residence at the usual time. Then, and all through his college course, Josiah's regular and serious habits of mind were especially shown in his regular attendance at the college chapel, which he only once omitted during the whole period; on which occasion the circumstance was looked on as so unusual, that after service the tutor and some of his friends repaired to his rooms, declaring that they quite expected to find him either dead or dying.

In the June of 1792 he was ordained to the curacy of Bewdley; but after taking priest's orders he wished to change his position, and therefore wrote to his father's friend, the Rev. R. Cecil, inquiring for a curacy in or near London. On getting his letter Mr. Cecil replied, "I want a curate myself; put a shirt in you pocket, and come and see whether my curacy will suit you."

This brief sentence it was that caused Josiah Pratt

to come up to London, where his great life-work lay before him, and where he spent all the rest of his most useful course. To work with and under the guidance of such a man as Mr. Cecil, was again doubtless an important part of his training; for Mr. Cecil's keen insight into character, and his knowledge of religious parties and questions, and of the special difficulties and dangers of the day, made him just the man to be, in such a case, the trainer as well as the friend of one who was to be as a wise father to many, as well as a discriminator and judge of character. It was five years after his ordination that Mr. Pratt married Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Mr. Jowett, of Newington, and settled in Doughty Street, Mecklenburgh Square, near St. John's Chapel. In the same year, 1797, he also became a member of the Eclectic Society.

We saw in Mr. Simeon's life how from the Eclectic arose the Church Missionary Society, with the early growth of which we shall be immediately occupied. But another project, and that one of Mr. Pratt's own origination, was also proposed, just then, in one of its meetings. On February 4th, 1799, he, though the youngest member present, put this question to the meeting :—" How far may a periodical publication be subservient to the interests of religion ? "

From the question itself it may of course be gathered, what perhaps most persons are aware of, that religious periodicals were not then the well-known class of literature which they now are ; in fact, that such periodicals then scarcely existed. The sug-

gestion may be regarded as that which originated a growing tide of religious literature, with untold results; and first of all there sprang from it what was for more than seventy years a very important publication, of which the influence has been widely felt,—namely, the *Christian Observer*, of which Mr. Pratt himself was the first editor.

Whilst still holding his curacy, and apparently from the time of his marriage, he received several pupils into his house, and among the rest the well-known Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, who ever retained for him a strong affection. Thus from the very first years of his ministry Mr. Pratt was a hard-working man; a curacy, with pupils, and an editorship, involve together more work than most young men could bear to undertake, and yet all this was only the beginning of his career. His great and special work lay yet before him, though now close at hand; for even in the year before he joined the Eclectic, the proposal to form a Church of England Society for missions to the heathen had been made by Mr. Simeon at one of its meetings; and now, just one fortnight after Mr. Pratt had first mooted the subject of religious periodicals, notice was given that on that day month this proposal would again be brought forward.

Accordingly on March 18th, 1799, the Rev. John Venn, rector of Clapham, opened the discussion at some length; Mr. Pratt seconded him; and as it would seem, it was he who brought the matter to a point by some distinct and business-like propositions. He said, "Let us regard ourselves as forming the

Society. Let us consider to whom it would be desirable to communicate our plans. Let us not proceed to choose a committee till we have a larger meeting. Let some short address be drawn up, stating our designs, and how we wish to act in following the leading of Providence. It should be known that there is such a design. Fix upon persons to write to. Must be kept in evangelical hands."

Then came the memorable gathering held at the Castle and Falcon Inn, Aldersgate Street, on April 12th, 1799, *when the Society was really instituted.* Again Mr. Venn was in the chair, and sixteen clergymen and nine laymen were present; a small meeting truly; but then its promoters were men of brave hearts, and used to difficulties; and they did not regard results as we of later date are apt to do, chiefly by numbers. Probably they remembered some still earlier meetings, consisting only of twelve persons, amongst whom an Omnipotent Thirteenth was present; and realized that this Omnipotent One, though unseen, was even then amongst them, to give the power which they desired.

A communication was then made to the secretary of the Christian Knowledge Society, which was received in a friendly spirit. The Rev. Thomas Scott became the Society's first secretary; and he undertook the post simply as a labour of love, to work in it as long as he was able. But his health was always bad, and when he accepted the living of Aston Sandford in 1802 he felt obliged to give up the secretaryship; and then Mr. Pratt immediately succeeded him. The

practical question of where to begin operations was then under consideration; and the attention of the newly-formed Church Missionary Committee was first directed where the eyes of Wilberforce had so often turned, and where John Newton had once toiled and sinned; namely, to the West Coast of Africa.

In the present day, when Church Missionary Associations are formed all over the land, and when the duty of going to the heathen is in some measure recognized, we must fail to realize the difficulties of the work of that first committee and its secretary. They soon found that it was one thing to see and recognize the duty, and quite another thing to find means to carry it out. True, they could meet and consult, and they could collect some funds; but it was a good while before they could get any further; for the men to go were not easily to be found.

Dr. Carey had heard the call to himself personally, and had gone forth; and so commenced the Baptist Missionary Society. But we cannot see which of these founders of the Church Missionary Society could have himself felt called to go; seeing that some were far too old, and that all had their appointed work at home.

At last their faith began to fail; and their hands to hang down; and some of them thought that the whole scheme must be abandoned. But just at that juncture, one excellent man, the Rev. William Goode, stood firm as a rock, and held up the courage of the rest. In his study were the committee accustomed to meet; and in his church, for the first sixteen years,

were the anniversary-sermons preached; and now, during these first four or five years did he stedfastly refuse to be daunted. "Persevere in prayer," he would say, "and when patience has had its perfect work, then the Lord will crown your efforts with success."

At last one way did open, though not the way they would have chosen. There was a missionary seminary at Berlin; and in this the committee heard there were young men willing to go if they would send them. So they accepted and sent out two of these, early in 1804,—of course, in Lutheran orders. The Christian Knowledge Society had, a century before, when they helped the Danes in Tranquebar, taken a like course; but in both cases the men who went did so under a pledge of conformity to the order of the church which sent them. The Rev. Messrs. Hartwig and Renner were the two now accepted; and on the 31st of January, 1804, they were publicly commended to the grace of God, the farewell address being given by Mr. Pratt; and then they sailed for Africa.

The sending forth of missionaries was not, however, the only channel through which the Society proposed to work. They needed to take Bibles and tracts in their hands; and as yet the Scriptures were not rendered into the languages of any of those distant nations to whom the glad tidings were to be sent. There was employment, therefore, for translators; and when this subject came fully under consideration, then the terrible dearth of Bibles, even in our own land, was made manifest.

About the same time there came a great demand for the Scriptures from Wales, where Rowland's mighty work had been done, and where Charles of Bala was then labouring; and then it was suggested that here was a work in which all Christians might unite. So on the 7th March in this same year, 1804, another public meeting was held, and that a well-attended and hearty one, which resulted in the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

At this meeting also Mr. Pratt was present; and he was chosen a member of the committee. A few days later this committee met, and decided to have three secretaries, one of the Church of England, one a Dissenting minister, and a third to represent the foreign churches.

An important member of the committee, Mr. Owen, at once pointed to Mr. Pratt as the right person to represent the Church of England. He could, however, only promise to fill the post until another suitable person should be found; and six weeks afterwards he felt obliged to resign it, when Mr. Owen was induced to be his successor. But though for only six weeks was Mr. Pratt the secretary of the Bible Society, he yet contrived in that short time so to arrange a constitution for it, that in after-years it was found to work satisfactorily.

We turn back now to the point whence we diverged, namely, the commencement of work in the Church Missionary Society, which was in reality the beginning of the now prosperous West African Church of Sierra Leone, the early history of which was, however,

one of disaster and disappointment. Seventy-four years ago, then, its foundation was laid; but the very first tidings were of sickness and sorrow,—one missionary reduced to the brink of the grave, and his wife on her way home. The next news were brighter, and two years after, three more Berlin students went out to strengthen the hands of the pioneers. They, however, did not arrive for seven long months, on account of the perils and reverses encountered on their way; and the next news was worse still. The missionaries were disputing amongst themselves,—disputing about priority. In time the blame was clearly traced to one person; and he one of the very first who had offered, and it was found necessary that he should be separated from the Society. Such a thing has hardly ever occurred since; but the committee were gaining a dearly-bought experience. Meantime, all Mr. Pratt's tact, wisdom, Christian experience, and gentleness were drawn out in the correspondence; nor did he work in vain. Those first missionaries were perhaps somewhat imperfectly trained, and too hastily chosen, but they were for the most part sincere and good men; so amidst all their failures a foundation was laid, schools were established, and books translated and prepared.

But death soon began to be busy amongst the little band, and the most pious of them all, first succumbed to the deadly climate. Nevertheless other brave Germans pressed into the ranks, and though of the next two, one fell in six months, still the supply of men continued.

This is the story in brief of the commencement of that great work which in the course of little more than seventy years has resulted in the establishment of a large native church, now, with the exception of the English bishop, entirely in native hands, as well as in the branching out thence of other missions, and notably that of the Niger, with its African bishop at its head.

It will, perhaps, make Mr. Pratt's work in connection with the Church Missionary Society more clear if, leaving for the present all the rest of his history—private, domestic and otherwise,—we go on to notice how the next field was taken up, and then the next, up to the expiration of his secretariat.

In 1808, the Rev. Samuel Marsden, chaplain of Port Jackson, returned to his native land on a visit; and whilst in England he made strong representations to the Church Missionary Committee as to the state of New Zealand, and the superior character, both physical and mental, of its inhabitants, some of whom he had seen in Australia. He proposed that they should at first send Christian men out to settle among the people, and introduce the common arts of life, together with as much religious teaching as they found possible. This proposition was adopted; and when Mr. Marsden returned, he took with him Mr. John King and Mr. and Mrs. Hall, to go as Christian settlers; and it so happened that a fine young New Zealander, who had come to England, returned by the same vessel which took them out. This young man, Duaterra, remained under Mr. Marsden's care for three

years; while the missionary settlers proceeded to their post as soon as possible. Others in course of years followed, and Mr. Marsden from time to time made visits to the island, and received other young chiefs into his Australian home, one of whom, Mowhee, died a true Christian in 1816. It was a long waiting-time in New Zealand before success came. Ordained missionaries followed the first settlers; but one and all had long to endure hardships, and to witness scenes which defy description. Nevertheless those noble men and women held on, and eventually, as is well known, though they had sown in tears, they reaped with joy; for success came at length in full measure, though not during Mr. Pratt's official connection with the Society. Meanwhile India, after all,—India more than any other land, engrossed the attention and drew out the longings of Christian men and women; and naturally so, because so many of England's sons and daughters had found there a home and wealth. Still, years passed, and while often perplexed and anxious about West African and New Zealand difficulties, the Church Missionary Society's committee turned in vain towards India. The East India Company would allow of no mission-work, except that in the south under the Christian Knowledge Society, to which length of time seemed to have given a sort of right.

In the north, Martyn, Thomason, and Corrie, in their capacity of chaplains, were doing what preparatory work they could; while in the Danish possession of Serampore, Dr. Carey was hard at work. But all else was hermetically sealed.

At length, however, in 1812 there came up once again the question of the renewal of the East India Company's charters; and again were the friends of missions determined to make a stand for God and His truth; and to renew the demand which on the last occasion, in 1793, Mr. Wilberforce had unsuccessfully made in Parliament. Missionary feeling had since then wonderfully increased in the country; and there was now a great rally round the promoters of the movement. Wilberforce, ever active, was again in the forefront of the battle; and he was ready to bring forward whatever it was decided would be wisest in the House of Commons; while Lord Gambier prepared to do the same in the Lords. But the whole country had to be roused in order to ensure success; and amidst all those who went heart and soul into the cause, Mr. Pratt was no unconspicuous worker. He exerted himself to the very utmost in framing petitions, in preparing statements, in arranging, and in planning; but he did more than that; for now, putting aside his own predilection for keeping in the back-ground, he went all over the country preaching and speaking in the cause. Christians of all denominations united in this matter; and besides the denominational, there were united gatherings of all sects; but the Church Missionary Society and the Christian Knowledge Society from the first took the lead; and such an excitement, such a thorough working up of the country on such a question had never before been known.

"Remember," wrote Mr. Pratt to a friend,

"that I am not only the sedentary secretary of the Society, but the travelling preacher; and everywhere I find the hearts of our English Christians open towards India, everywhere the praises of God for raising up Abdool and Corrie and their fellow-labourers are heard. . . . I will plead for India from Berwick-upon-Tweed to the Land's End, rather than not meet its just demand."

"It is a great stimulus to our hopes and expectations," he wrote again, "that we see such zeal kindling around us. We went to Norwich under great discouragement, but the result has taught us never to distrust God while we are labouring in His cause. The churches would not hold the multitudes that flocked to them. Let us give God all the praise, and take courage."

One result of this great effort was the rapid growth of the Society which Mr. Pratt represented, so that in one year its income was quadrupled. In 1812 it was £3,000, and in 1813 it had risen to over £12,000. Nor did the impulse prove merely temporary; for its receipts continued steadily to increase, until in ten years more the income had reached the sum of £36,000, a manifest sign that the Church now began in some measure to realize her duty towards the vast heathen world which it had so long neglected. "These topics," wrote Mr. Pratt, "animate more than they ever did the public ministrations of our Church; they are carried home with us to our families; they enter into the daily prayers which we offer with them to the Father of mercies."

It was a vast change, and one which in the delineation of future events we might well have supposed would be foretold, as we believe it was foretold, in the pages of prophecy.

Looking to India, Christian people at length felt that they could wait no longer; and so in 1812 the Church Missionary Society determined to send readers, as they were not yet permitted to send ordained ministers. However, they had not long to wait; as the very next year the bill passed which opened India to the heralds of salvation.

And now amidst all the joy and all the mutual congratulations, many could see why all the long opposition had been permitted, and why it had been so ordered that the battle should be thus hard to win. "Some great events were required to rouse the public mind," wrote Mr. Pratt. "The discussions during the last two years, and the efforts of this Society and of other Christian bodies to awaken the public attention to this great act of national duty, have been abundantly repaid in the interest which is generally felt on this subject throughout the country."

Several years before this the Church Missionary Society had been assisting by grants of money a translation of the Scriptures into Arabic. To have readers of these Scriptures in the native tongues was naturally the next step; and in this work Abdool Messeeh, a Mohammedan converted under Henry Martyn's ministry, had taken part. His labours were instrumental to many other conversions. He had travelled with Archdeacon Corrie (afterwards Bishop

of Madras), and was then employed as a regular catechist; and the journals of his proceedings were always read with great avidity at home.

Henceforth things went forward.

As soon as the liberty to work openly was obtained, the Rev. Mr. Schnarre and the afterwards famous Rev. Mr. Rhenius—who had been destined for Africa, proceeded to India; and, what was a great step in advance, two English clergymen accompanied them also as missionaries. The names of these two pioneers of the really English mission army deserve to be recorded. They were the Rev. Thomas Norton and the Rev. William Greenwood.

Meantime Mr. Charles Grant exerted himself to fill the Indian chaplaincies with proper men; and a scheme for a regular ecclesiastical system for India, first proposed by this same Dr. Buchanan, was adopted. The first Bishop of Calcutta was appointed, and all the good people who belonged to the Church of England then hoped to see what they felt to be the most perfect ecclesiastical system, so developed and worked in India that the work of preaching the gospel in that land might be wonderfully facilitated.

But what happened? Why, that though God was about to work, yet it was not to be in the way that they expected.

The first bishop was Dr. Middleton, vicar of St. Pancras, well known to Mr. Pratt, and highly esteemed by him, a man favourable to mission work, a great admirer of Corrie, and one of the best friends

of missions in India. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Middleton, looking at the canons of the Church, and his own letters patent, felt that they only empowered him to exercise his functions in regard to the English clergy, and even to them, only as working among their own countrymen.

Disappointed in their hopes of seeing a native church in India in connection with the Church of England, Abdool and another country-born young man were therefore at once ordained by the Lutheran missionaries in Calcutta; though on the appointment of the next bishop, the difficulty being removed, they were re-ordained by him.

Archdeacon Corrie was in 1815 driven home by sickness; and his visit to England was the means of stirring up the growing interest felt in India; and when he returned he took back with him an addition of seven clergymen in English orders.

The difficulty of getting Englishmen to become missionaries had now disappeared; and Mr. Pratt was able to write to the principal of the Berlin Institution, that they could, at least for the present, supply the men from home.

All seemed at that time going in the right direction, and the outlook was hopeful. Mr. Pratt therefore took advantage of the prevalent feeling of interest to bring out a periodical which he had long contemplated, and which was called the *Missionary Register*. That also has proved a model for many similar publications that have appeared in the last sixty years.

In fact, it is clear that at that period Mr. Pratt

must have been about the hardest-working clergyman in London.

Up to 1804 he had continued to be curate to Mr. Cecil at St. John's, Bedford Row. Then being chosen afternoon lecturer at St. Mary Woolnoth, he resigned his curacy. In the same year, however, he was elected to two other lectureships, a Sunday evening one at Spitalfields Church, and a week-night lecture at St. Lawrence Jewry.

A year after that he undertook Mr. Newton's curacy, and, in fact, the whole Sunday duty, as Mr. Newton was then too old to preach himself. Thus he had for a time four sermons a week; and it is the testimony of the late Mr. Bickersteth, amongst others, that he was a very good and edifying preacher. "I yet treasure up in my recollection sermons which I heard from him thirty years ago," he said, in the funeral sermon which he preached after his death.

He had then no pastoral charge, so that whatever spare time he had was given to the preparation of his sermons. But towards the end of the year 1809 some of his friends obtained for him the appointment to Wheler Chapel, Spital Square. They succeeded in this by informing the patron that they were ready to put the chapel into good repair if he acceded to their request, and this was done at the cost of £1,100. There he ministered for sixteen years, and from the outset the Spitalfields Benevolent Society, which has proved so great a blessing to the poor of the neighbourhood, was set on foot; but, being a chapel, there were no parochial duties.

Among the fruits of that ministry were two who were afterwards known as among the excellent of the earth, the late Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and Mr. Samuel Hoare. During that period he also undertook some very considerable literary labours.

One of these was the publication of all Bishop Hall's works, then for the first time collected in ten octavo volumes. These he brought out in 1808; and the next year he published the whole works of Bishop Hopkins. He was induced to undertake these labours as an antidote to the prevalent habit of ridiculing the professors of Christianity as weak and imbecile persons; whilst but little attention was paid to the solid work of our older divines.

When the European war was over and peace was restored, many new openings for good soon presented themselves. He then tried to enlist other nations in the great work of missions. He corresponded with Christian people in America, and may be said to have been the primary suggester of the Protestant American Episcopal Church.

There came also another suggestion from Dr. Claudius Buchanan for making an attempt to revive the ancient churches in the East; and after a little time Mr. Pratt's own brother-in-law, the Rev. William Jowett, volunteered for this, which was called the Mediterranean Mission. This was carried on for some years, though with no great encouragement; and the committee at length came to the conclusion that more is to be hoped for in lands where the sound of the gospel has never penetrated, than

in those where the candlesticks have long since been removed.

Up to the year 1814 the Rev. Thomas Scott had continued to receive and prepare at Aston Sandford those candidates who were destined for Indian work. Then his health failed, and some other means had to be sought.

It was just about that time—that is only three or four years later—that the Missionary Institution at Basle was founded, as a thank-offering for the preservation which the city had experienced from the destruction which had threatened it.

In this institution the Church Missionary Society found a valuable help, as many students came thence as laymen, sometimes to be further prepared, —always to be ordained by the Bishop of London. They came also without prejudice against our Prayer-book, and fully prepared to adopt its order and use.

Sometimes, too, English candidates were first sent on probation to some clergyman, and then in particular cases sent on to one of the universities.

Mr. Pratt, however, feeling that none of these expedients were exactly satisfactory, continued to urge the foundation of a collegiate establishment in connection with the Society in London. To him, therefore, is due in the first instance the credit of the opening in 1825 of the Islington Missionary College, which has proved of such incalculable benefit to the Society, and through it to the heathen world.

Ere he gave up the helm at the Church Missionary House, in 1824, success had come to gladden the hearts

of the toilers in West Africa, where Johnson's short but wonderful course was already run, and where other of the faithful labourers were also reaping such rich fruit, that of the 16,000 liberated Africans, the greater part had already renounced their old superstitions, one-fifth being under instruction in schools, and 700 in full Christian communion. And besides all this, there was the promise of a native ministry in Samuel Crowther, once a slave boy, then in orders, and now in our own time Bishop of the Niger.

In New Zealand it was still a time of sowing, and the faith of the missionaries was yet tried to the utmost. Decided success, indeed, did not come until 1831, but Mr. Pratt lived to see it in full tide.

As for India, most of the principal stations were already planted; and from Krishnagur and Tinnevelly news had already come of thousands renouncing their idols and being received into the Christian Church.

Other tokens for good were also manifest, not only before Mr. Pratt's removal, but before his resignation of the post which he had so long held; and among these was the fact that the very stirring of the question of missions had excited a healthful emulation in other bodies, and that the old Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had not only thoroughly entered on the field, but that it likewise was reaping fruit.

Then, again, the second Bishop of Calcutta was Heber, the author of the well-known hymn beginning, "From Greenland's icy mountains," and an old

member of the Church Missionary Society. And he, before leaving England, had obtained a distinct opinion from the King's Advocate, that all ministers of the Church of England within his diocese were under his jurisdiction as much as the chaplains; so that great difficulty was at an end.

In the spring of 1823, Mr. Pratt was invited by some of the leading parishioners of St. Stephen's Coleman Street, to offer himself as a candidate for the vacant living, the appointment to which was vested in the householders. He felt this to be just an indication of the divine will, and therefore did so, and was elected. But one of the unsuccessful candidates permitted his supporters to dispute the voting; and the case was thrown into Chancery. So three years intervened, and then, a new election being ordered, he was again chosen, and very shortly entered on the post which he occupied for the last eighteen years of his life. About the same time, his old friend, the Rev. D. Wilson, was made vicar of the parish of Islington.

Mr. Pratt regarded his own appointment as a merciful arrangement for his later years; and though he had now about 4,000 souls under his care, he was able to enter well supported on his work; and this, because he had a family who were like-minded with himself, and whom he could comfortably enlist as his co-workers; for he had truly trained his children to walk with him in the narrow way. The most important matters had been really put first in their education; and now he had in them an earnest band

of helpers, and could with comfort start his schools, his visiting societies, and his missionary association.

His own love of reading, natural from a boy, was not to be daunted even by defective sight. His mind would work. To be mentally active was a necessity to him; and after he was settled in St. Stephen's, in addition to all the reading which was involved in the management of the *Missionary Register*, he set about the compilation of a Book of Psalms and Hymns for the use of his own congregation; and "Pratt's Hymn-book" was soon adopted in many another church, until the sale reached in a comparatively short time to many thousands. And as it was with all his other works, he here again, though not as literally as in some other cases, *started an idea.* New collections of hymns are much more common now than they were then. But as soon as Mr. Pratt found that this book seemed to meet a want, he began another, intended for social and domestic use.

Two other important works in which he took part during this period should also here be mentioned: the one was the formation of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, in which he was an influential mover; and the other was, an object in which it was natural to him as a City rector to sympathize,—namely, the establishment by the Corporation, on the basis of an old foundation, of the City of London School. He took very great interest in this, and even drew up some suggestions on the occasion, which were embodied in an Act of Parliament. One of these suggestions was, that the Bible should be

daily read and explained in the school; and that such a rule should be made was, indeed, no small matter.

Mr. Pratt held the living of St. Stephen's from 1826 to 1844, when he was called to his rest. During that period he had the comfort of seeing another obstacle cleared out of the way of his loved society People had often said that the bishops held aloof, and that therefore it was no true Church of England society; but at length, first the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Bishop of London, and after them others of the bench, came in and gave their adhesion to this holy cause. In 1831 the Rev. Daniel Wilson, of Islington, became Bishop of Calcutta, making the fifth bishop in only nine years. It required some courage to take such a post; but Bishop Wilson was spared to fill the see for many a long year; and when Archdeacon Corrie was soon after appointed to the newly erected see of Madras with Ceylon, the outlook for the Indian Church seemed bright indeed.

But Mr. Pratt was to have ties yet dearer and closer in that far-off land; for in 1838 his second son went out to be domestic chaplain to Bishop Wilson. And soon after he had the trial of a similar separation when one of his daughters married and went out to New Zealand; but the father's words with reference to both these events, were to the effect that, being able to rejoice over ALL his children as children of the covenant, he would willingly yield them to God's will as to the years of their sojourning on earth.

On the 30th of August, 1844, Mr. Pratt was seized with paralysis, which deprived him of the use of one

side, but left his mind unimpaired. This last illness was only of some two months' duration; but it was characterized by a very remarkable depression of mind, on a view of his own unprofitableness; so that by a strong consciousness of His Saviour's presence, he seemed to anticipate more of self-abasement than of triumphant joy. When his departure was known, the unanimous election by the parishioners of his son as his successor immediately followed. And now, on that son's retirement, in consequence of failing health, *his* son also has been appointed in his stead,—a very remarkable proof of the respect in which the family are held.

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